




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Ryan**

**MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 September 2021

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (5.29 pm): Mr Speaker, I start by acknowledging you on your reappointment as Speaker of the parliament. It is always good to have someone as fair-minded and diligent as you as the Speaker. I congratulate you and commend you again. It is certainly good to be back and it is good to have the opportunity to respond to the Governor's address. I thank His Excellency for the kind words that he gave of the government's agenda. I look forward to working alongside all of my parliamentary colleagues in delivering the expectations that the people of Queensland have for this government and for this parliament.

At its heart politics is about people, not only the people who represent community in this House but the people who make up community. It is about their wishes, their desires. It is about ensuring that there is opportunity for people to reach their full potential. I think sometimes what gets lost in the robustness of debate is the individuals who make up our community and the impact that decisions in this House can have on those individuals and also the opportunity that we, as members of parliament, have to make an impact on people in our own communities, to help them in the challenges that they face, to work with them to create opportunity for jobs and economic activity for the future, for their children.

I want to start by sharing a few stories that I have gathered in just the last 12 months about the impact that politics can have on individuals in my community. I want to start by talking about a dear friend of mine Davina Oliver—an outstanding woman. I met Davina four years ago when she came to visit my office about a health challenge that she had. She had had a laryngectomy. Back in 2017, the only medical equipment that was subsidised for people with laryngectomies was not up to scratch. There were dressings and such. Davina and others who had laryngectomies were subject to getting infections. It was very difficult.

I developed a bond with Davina because my dear grandma, Grandma Ryan, at a very early age had had a tracheotomy. Grandma Ryan is one of my idols. She was so passionate about the labour movement. I was very sad that she died the year before I was elected to this House, in 2009. She would have loved to see me here. So I developed this bond with Davina. Davina and I went around lobbying people to get the subsidy approved by Queensland Health for devices called HMEs, which would make a big difference for people with laryngectomies.

We saw then Minister Dick. He provided very good guidance and asked us to continue our lobbying. We then saw the next health minister, Minister Miles. He again provided great guidance to us and was able to help convince Queensland Health to fund that subsidy. I was able to send a message to Davina in January 2019 to congratulate her on her advocacy. She responded by saying—

What can I say but thank you so much for all the assistance with this matter. I really could never have done it without you.

The fact that you had a very personal experience with your grandmother has made it perhaps a little easier for you to represent us to all the appropriate people concerned, not only once but twice and followed it through right to the end.

It is a great win not only for us who live with it but a lot of the credit must be attributed to you and your effort.

The credit should be attributed to Davina—a determined woman from Caboolture who met with her local MP because she wanted to make a change for many hundreds of people. I saw Davina's husband, Ian, during the last election campaign. He floored me with something that he said. He said that six weeks before I had run into him before the election Davina had passed away. I am not normally a person who just cries, but at that moment I broke down because I was so inspired by Davina and her advocacy and her determinedness that it reinforced to me the power of people to make a difference. I hope, as a believer that there is something after this life, that Davina has caught up with Grandma Ryan and that they are cheering on this parliament to continue to make a difference for people in our community.

I also want to talk about Scott and Kerry, who came to see me about their daughter, Zara. They were having trouble getting information about EpiPens for their little daughter, Zara. Through advocacy we were able to get Zara recategorised and seen by Queensland Health. They were able to get the necessary paperwork across the line to get those EpiPens on the PBS. I received a little note from Scott and Kerry this year which said—

Again we wanted to take the time to thank you because without your intervention we would not have been recategorised nor would we have been given the opportunity to purchase an epipen under the PBS. Today we were fortunate that we could afford the epipen next time it will have been you who saved her life. So thank you.

I want to talk about Ashley, Justyna and Hugo, who had some trouble getting the paperwork done to get the stimulus money to purchase their house which the Queensland government and the federal government had coordinated during the pandemic. They sent an email in desperation the night before applications closed. For some reason I got up early that morning and I checked the electorate office email. That would not be my normal practice, because normally I would read the paper or check ministerial briefing notes or the like. For some reason I checked the electorate office email and I saw this email from Ashley, Justyna and Hugo asking for help. Before 6 am I rang my parliamentary colleague Scott Stewart and said, 'Mate, I need you to help get the paperwork processed on this. This is the last day for these people to get the paperwork in.' I got this email from Ashley, Justyna and Hugo which said—

When Brent called and advised that Minister Ryan had read my email on Friday morning and had contacted Minister Stewart who then contacted the department I was speechless.

We got Titles and successfully settled ... We are now citizens of Caboolture!!

...

Thank you once again for your help.

I also want to highlight the massive impact that we can have by advocating on behalf of people who need a little bit of help, who are experiencing some disadvantage. One of the biggest inquiries that comes into my electorate office is about housing from people who are in need of help, people who are in need of some guidance. Noela came into my electorate office recently, and I want to wish her well. We were able to assist her to get some disability accommodation. I want to acknowledge Robert who, because of his PTSD, anxiety and depression, found it very difficult dealing with government agencies. We were able to assist him. I want to acknowledge Casey, who was a survivor of domestic violence and had three boys and was living in a tent and needed some assistance. We were able to assist her into housing. We must never forget the people who put us here but we should also never forget the people we can help, the people we can provide opportunity for.

This gives me the opportunity to acknowledge the outstanding support that I receive as a member of parliament from many different people: firstly, my electorate office—Brent, Michael and Yvonne—and the wonderful volunteers who come in and help every day in my electorate. Those stories of helping people are the stories of the effort of my electorate office, the stories of their compassion, their determination and their initiative to provide assistance. I want to give a particular shout-out to them and the absolute selfless dedication they have to create a better community in the Morayfield electorate.

I also want to acknowledge my ministerial staff, who are tireless workers for the Labor movement. They are outstanding people. They not only provide great support to members of parliament to ensure that members of parliament have appropriate support in dealing with constituent inquiries relevant to my portfolio areas but they have a real compassion for every single Queenslanders. They dedicate many hours and endure many stressful moments to ensure that this government delivers for the people of Queensland. I want to acknowledge all of my ministerial staff, in particular my chief of staff Ellen McIntyre, who has been a long servant of Labor governments in Queensland. She is an absolute gem and a valuable asset to me, and I certainly would not be able to be as effective as I am without her support.

I also want to acknowledge the outstanding labour movement and the Australian Labor Party—this proud movement that has been responsible for so much progressive change in our state and our nation, and for the wonderful opportunity I have to represent that movement not only in my community but here in this parliament. I thank all of the Labor Party members, volunteers, unionists and general supporters for their assistance during the last campaign and beyond. I certainly have the support of some wonderful people who are tireless in their contributions. I would particularly like to acknowledge Michael, my campaign director, and Drew, who has been a great support to me, as well as Craig and Alex for their dedication during the last campaign along with Yvonne, Nathan and the rest of the supporters. Well done; thank you very much. As a final word of thanks before moving on to some of the great things I look forward to achieving during the next term I of course acknowledge my family: my mum and dad, Pete and Robbie; my brother Gerry; the extended family; and my wife Holly and my two boys Daniel and Flynn—

**Ms Pugh:** Hear, hear!

**Mr RYAN:** Thank you very much, Jess. I would not have two boys or a wife like Holly without Jess introducing me to Holly, so thank you very much. Jess is the reason I have all these grey hairs.

**An honourable member:** At least you've got hair, mate!

**Mr RYAN:** Touche. I want to acknowledge my family. When I was first elected to representative politics, to this parliament, I did not realise the impact it has on those who most care for you. I did not appreciate it, but over time I have grown to become overwhelmed by it and concerned by it, because often those who most care for you are most impacted by criticism of you. We as representatives develop a bit of a thick skin. We as representatives choose the combat. We choose this arena, but often our families do not. The support that I receive, particularly from Mum and Dad, Pete and Robbie, my brother Gerry, and Holly and our two boys, is overwhelming and it is extraordinary. I love them all very much. I know that they give so much of themselves to support me, and I hope that they know I am also giving a lot of myself to them in building a stronger, safer, better community. I acknowledge all of them.

It truly is exceptional to be back in government and back in this House. I know that the Palaszczuk Labor government will continue to deliver for the people of the Morayfield state electorate. I want to particularly thank all of those people who voted for me and for those who did not, because it is through that strong conversation, that strong dialogue that we all have in our communities around how to build a better, safer, stronger and more caring community, that we are able to challenge each other to find ways to achieve those lofty goals. I was able to build on some of the hard work that I have done since first being elected over a decade ago now. In 2009 I was first elected to this parliament.

**An honourable member:** You were so young!

**Mr RYAN:** You have to look closely for the grey hair and wrinkles and sometimes I feel very old. I was able to build on some of those successes. I was pleased to achieve some very good election commitments which are already in train and we are already starting to deliver.

There is funding for a new PCYC at Caboolture. This will make a big difference. We are going to put the PCYC right in the middle of town. We are going to have a new facility that is fit for purpose. The only thing we are waiting on is the federal government's co-contribution, so again I say to Terry Young, 'Show me the money. Give me the money.' We will get there. We also have some money for a new clubhouse for Caboolture Rugby and Touch; and new money for Caboolture hockey—I know the member for Bancroft loves his hockey—so Caboolture hockey is going to have some new facilities.

There is a new ambulance station at Morayfield. We got the satellite hospital. We got an upgrade—and I acknowledge the member for Kurwongbah and his advocacy—for the Burpengary train station. We got a security fence, which has already been delivered, at Morayfield East State School. We got a new school hall for Morayfield State High School which is almost finished. We got a new joint school hall for Caboolture State High School and the Lee Street Special School.

We also have more money for the Bruce Highway upgrades. We have more money for new classrooms in the electorate. We have an outside school hours care facility going into Caboolture East State School. That will make a big difference. As part of the government's overarching commitments to delivering more frontline services we also have more police coming to our area, more teachers, more doctors and more nurses, and of course we are investing in those services around early intervention, prevention and health care.

As a minister in the government I also have the opportunity to serve the people of Queensland in other ways. I am very grateful for that opportunity. I am grateful for the opportunity to meet people all over the state, to work closely with stakeholders and to continue the government's great work of investing in the front line and building better, safer and more caring communities. I did very much appreciate the opportunity to travel around the state during the election campaign and support many people in this parliament.

**Mr Harper:** On the bus.

**Mr RYAN:** On the bus and otherwise, doing the diagrams and otherwise and not selling the Townsville academy; we did that too. I want to finish off where I started, by reflecting on people. As I travelled around the state during the last campaign I had a couple of conversations that have stuck in my mind. At times you get a little spring in your step because you use them as a bit of a straw poll about how we are going, how people are going to vote and what things are looking like on the ground. When you've got the taxidriver in Townsville who drives you from the airport out to the Stewart prison, where we got the bus from, saying how good the Labor government is doing and how the Labor government is delivering for Townsville, and when he's dropped you off in front of the TV cameras and he's honking the horn as he is going saying 'vote Labor', you know you're going alright. When you've got the fish and chip bloke in Cairns—best fish and chips in the universe, by the way—saying how good the government is doing investing in the front line, having a vision for the community, keeping the community safe from COVID-19, you know you're going alright. At pre-poll at Bundaberg I could not believe the number of people who were coming up to Tom Smith, giving him high fives, encouraging him and saying 'good job' and 'well done' to the government for keeping the community safe. When you hear that you know you're going alright. When you've got people from the gel blaster community coming up to you saying 'thank you very much' for securing the industry but in a safe, controlled way—

**An opposition member:** You're kidding! You must be joking!

**Mr RYAN:** When you have people from the gel blaster community acknowledging what we have done—now because of our framework the industry in Queensland is worth over \$200 million and employs hundreds and hundreds of people—you know you're going all right.

Finally, when you are at the Caboolture markets standing next to a sign with the Premier's face on it and a fellow comes up to you and says, 'I've never voted Labor in my life, ever, but because of her I'm going to vote Labor for the first time,' you know you are going all right. He did also then say, 'But don't let it go to your head, mate. It's because of her, not you.' Elections are about people. Politics is about people. I am very proud to represent my community in this parliament. I look forward to serving them for the rest of this term.