




Speech By
Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

Record of Proceedings, 11 March 2021

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (4.59 pm): I rise to respond to the Governor's speech and in so doing acknowledge the Governor and his responsibility to ensure stable government in Queensland. Firstly, I thank the people of the state seat of Coomera, which encompasses around 330 square kilometres at the northern most part of the Gold Coast, for their confidence in me and for allowing me to represent them for a fifth term. I am honoured to be their representative and assure them that I will represent their interests in this House and, in so doing, hold the government to account at every opportunity.

Thank you too to the people who supported me during the last election for your efforts. I particularly acknowledge two individuals who were there for me, were the backbone of the campaign and were ably supported by many, many others. Mike and Bailey, thank you both for your constant support. Without you and without the rest of the team we could not have achieved a fifth term. To my wife, my sons, my brother Kev and my grandson, thank you for your constant support and encouragement. In particular, I thank my wife, Pauline, who works tirelessly in my office as a volunteer through every term and so much more. Thank you, my love. Believe me when I say that without your support and encouragement I do not believe I could do this job.

To my staff: Trish, who has been with me from the start and is a solid support, keeping an eye on absolutely everything and with an attention to detail that is incredible; and Judi, who just loves her job so much.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr CRANDON: That shines through, as Deb Frecklington has just acknowledged, in the way she greets everyone and deals with everything that is thrown at her. What a great team. Now we have Jodie doing a few hours a week on a part-time basis. She did some casual work with us last year and made it very clear that she wanted to work with us going forward. That is a direct reflection on the positive office environment.

I also thank then leader of the opposition, Deb Frecklington, and then deputy leader, Tim Mander, for their efforts and constant support of me in my role as the member for Coomera. Thank you both sincerely. Thank you for your tireless efforts.

I turn now to my speech on the address-in-reply. I do not recall any comment by the Governor that urged the government to go slow on the northern Gold Coast roads program. Nowhere in the Governor's address did I hear him say that he expected the government would go slow when it came to delivering infrastructure on the northern Gold Coast. Sadly, that is what is happening in the fastest growing region in Queensland. We now have over 46,000 voters and an estimated 84,000-plus residents according to the Queensland Government Statistician, and yet we have a go-slow mentality by this government.

'What projects?' I hear you say. I am glad you asked. Let me start with the second M1, the Coomera Connector as it is also known. It is more popularly known as the second M1. It is intended to eventually take 60,000 vehicles—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Logan and member for Gympie, stop your cross-chamber quarrelling please.

Mr CRANDON: The second M1, the Coomera Connector, is ultimately meant to take 60,000 vehicles off the M1.

Mr O'Connor: When?

Mr CRANDON: Beyond 2024 is my best guess. I take the interjection from the member for Bonney. I will spend a little bit of time on that project. The LNP had a plan to deliver stage 1 which was going to be around six and a bit kilometres. It was going to be completed this term. It was going to start in Shipper Drive on the northern side of the Coomera River and finish at the Gold Coast Highway on the other side of the river. It was going to be around 6.1 or 6.2 kilometres.

In came the government with five minutes to go before the election and suggested that that was absolutely ridiculous—it is not long enough, it is not going to do anything and it is going to cause all sorts of trouble. They were going to do a 16-kilometre stretch of road. My question was—and many papers asked the same question: when, Minister? 'It will take some time,' was the response generally speaking, 'but we will start it this term'.

It turns out that Labor's stage 1 is stage 1 north, stage 1 central and stage 1 south. In any other language that is three stages. The first stage is going to be delivered this term. How long is it? It is less than four kilometres. In fact, what it is is a very long bridge. It is the Coomera River bridge that starts at Shipper Drive on the northern side of the river and finishes at Helensvale Road, nowhere near the Gold Coast Highway, on the southern side of the river. The type of congestion that the minister was talking about our plan was going to cause is going to be multiplied.

What do we see then? Sometime—fingers crossed this term—we may see stage 1 central started. It will not be finished this term. That will be finished maybe next term. Who knows when we are going to get stage 1 south started. Probably sometime after 2024 when we see those three segments finished—and that is a 16-kilometre stretch of something like a 56-kilometre road. That is 16 kilometres over the next two terms of a 56-kilometre road. When would members like to guess the next 40 kilometres will be delivered by those opposite? It will not be sometime this decade. It might be sometime next decade, if we are lucky. Fortunately, 2024 might change things around a little. We might see an LNP government come in—and I sincerely hope we do—and then we can actually look forward to fast-tracking some of these projects.

We have had a couple of wins, by the way. The police station is now committed. With a lot of lobbying, the police station has now been fast-tracked. I have to thank the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services for being prepared to give up part of a block of land that was under his—

Mr Crawford: As in the old one not the new one?

Mr CRANDON: My apologies, I thank the former minister for giving up a piece of land on Cox Street which is where I had been saying for some time that we need a new police station—the never-to-be-built Pimpama police station. We got the block of land. In came Katarina Carroll and all the stars lined up. She had been there for six weeks and came in and said, 'That makes complete sense. We are building a police station there.' It was a done deal. Then we just had to see it fast-tracked. Guess what? After a lot more lobbying it has been fast-tracked. It will be delivered in November this year.

All of the whinging I do, as referred to by the police minister—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Logan and member for Gympie, you are both warned under the standing orders.

Mr CRANDON: I do not take all of the credit for the work that has been done. My constituency kept on working hard and lobbying the government right alongside me. There were petitions and so forth to get that sorted.

An honourable member: Petitions? I have never seen any petitions from you!

Mr CRANDON: I have a few petitions. If members want a bit of information on petitions, I can tell them that last term there were 33 petitions from me. There were another eight petitions that I lodged last term but they did not come out until 1 December so technically they could not be counted for last term. All in all there were 41 petitions. A few of them have got through and we have had some wins.

One petition that we have not had a win on—that is a good segue—is the number of police we are going to have at the Pimpama police station. Try as I might, I have not been able to get from the minister how many police we are going to have at the Pimpama police station. God forbid, please do not even think about taking them from Coomera Police Station because that will create all sorts of havoc. Today I can inform the House that I have written to Katarina Carroll—I have got around the obstacle—to ask her to please provide me with some information in that regard. We will see how we get on with that one.

Exit 41 is another win. We are actually going to get exit 41 delivered this term—guaranteed. In fact, it might even be delivered in 2022. Again, that was the result of a lot of lobbying and a lot of support from the federal government who came in with 50 per cent. The same cannot be said about exit 38. Exit 38 has had a business case in place since 2018. There is not one dollar in the budget or the forward estimates for exit 38. It is most desperately needed, but there is no money there. Fingers crossed that we might get exit 49 in 2023 or just before the next election in 2024—how would that be for timing! How would that be for delivery! Exit 45 south never came to fruition. We have had no luck there. We cannot get a second exit from the M1. All we are getting is a slip lane to go back on to Lahrs Road right outside my office—and, no, that was not for my benefit!

The hospital and health precinct is an interesting one. Fascinating material was released by the Premier on the day the polling opened—on 19 October. The headline read ‘\$160: First look at Gold Coast’s new hospital in fastgrowing north area’. That sounds like we are going to get a hospital. Doesn’t that sound like we are going to get a hospital? \$160 million is a good start. No. How much do you reckon of that \$160 million was for that hospital?

Mr O’Connor: I know the figure, but I’ll say, ‘Not much.’

Mr CRANDON: There was \$3 million for planning. We had committed \$4 million to do the planning. By the way, I have met with the CEO and the chair of the hospital board. They have told me that they are going to have to go back to the government to get more money because \$3 million is nowhere near enough. We would have been closer at \$4 million, but who knows.

There it was with photos and all sorts of things. There were even drawings. There was a photo of the Premier standing with the health minister and the candidate with a drawing on a board—somewhere in the Gold Coast hospital, I think—saying, ‘Look at this! Look at what we are going to be doing.’ No, they are not. They are just going to plan one. It has nothing to do with actually delivering a hospital at all. Anyway, I digress.

I have only seven minutes to go. I have about another 15 items that I have to talk about. I do not know how I am going to get through them. I will cut through to a few items. Here is a good one. We have been constantly fighting for a police citizens youth club on the northern Gold Coast. That all started with a petition, as a matter of fact. In fact, there were two petitions back to back. Both petitions were knocked back: ‘No. We’re not building a police citizens youth club on the northern Gold Coast. That’s not happening.’

It does not matter that we have huge support. We have a ‘coalition of the willing’ on the northern Gold Coast for this police citizens youth club. The Gold Coast City Council is on board. Business owners around the area are on board. Local doctors who work with youth are on board. Local school principals are on board. The Rotary Club of Ormeau-Pimpama is a huge supporter of the project and in fact pulled a proposal together to put to the Gold Coast City Council to try to secure the land. The North Gold Coast RSL Sub Branch is on board. Man Up—one of the groups that works hard in the community with youth—is on board. The police are on board. But the government is not on board, so there you go. We had no luck there.

I was talking about the exits from the M1. I talked about exits 38, 41 and 49. Are you listening?

Mr O’Connor interjected.

Mr CRANDON: I ask the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to take a leaf out of Education Queensland’s book, because they know how to plan and deliver infrastructure in advance of what is needed. When I came to office in 2009 I had nine schools; we now have 22 schools. No. 23, the special school, is coming on board in 2022. That is all great news. It is all great planning by Education Queensland. I have over 19,000 students going to school in my electorate. In fact, there are three schools just outside my electorate that take another 2,000, so I have over 20,000—probably 21,000— young people who go to school from my electorate and most of them are going to school in my electorate.

That is where the Minister for Transport and Main Roads should take some advice from as far as planning is concerned. I know that he is sensitive about these issues. In fact, I know that the Minister for Police is also sensitive about these issues. To be honest, when it comes down to it, I am sensitive

about these issues as well. So when the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Minister for Police are reported in the media as saying, 'The member for Coomera, Michael Crandon, is whingeing,' it causes me to reflect on my role. What the member for Coomera is actually doing is bringing forward the issues that are of concern to the residents of the Coomera electorate. In effect, what the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Minister for Police are saying is that the people of Coomera are whingeing. They are pointing the finger at the people who elected me to this place and saying they are whingeing—and that is not on. As I mentioned earlier, these people live in the fastest growing region in Queensland.

Exit 49 is a classic example of a project that needs to be fast-tracked because it is the conduit to the centre of the fastest growing region—the suburb of Pimpama. Really, the minister and his advisers do not even seem to understand the detail of the northern Gold Coast region. I spoke yesterday about the response from the Minister for Transport to one of my constituents who wrote directly to him, and copied me in, talking about a bus service in Coomera. That is not bad given the inquiry was about the 729 bus service which does not go anywhere near Coomera! It is a bus service between Ormeau station and Beenleigh station.

Mr Power: Isn't it in the electorate of Coomera?

Mr CRANDON: I take the interjection from the member for Logan. That is not what the letter of response said. It talked about Coomera the suburb. Not only did they not research it; the proof of them not researching it was that they did not know the area the inquiry was about. It brought back memories of me pushing for an extension of the 722 service and the minister saying that constituents could catch another service after five o'clock if they could not catch that one. He did not realise that there were no other services on that route! We are not the middle of Brisbane; we are the northern Gold Coast. We have one bus service. They did not realise that. It could not happen. They did not know that there were no other bus services there.

The Ormeau train station car park was another classic example that they did not understand. I arranged a half-hour meeting, but he arrived eight minutes late and left on time, so I was given 22 minutes to talk about a whole bunch of issues. Anyway, in that particular case I did have a win because I explained to him that we needed more than 70 additional car parks at the train station. They argued that there was not any room; I argued that there was. He listened to me finally—and guess what? We got 125 additional car parks at Ormeau station, so I thank the minister for that.

In my last minute I now turn to the election itself. There were dirty tactics but I hasten to add not by the candidate—by his Labor overlords, yes, and by some of his supporters, yes, but not by the candidate. He played a clean game. He was a straight shooter and I appreciated that, and he appreciated the way we ran things as well.

In closing, I make a commitment to all residents of the Coomera electorate that I look forward to representing them to the best of my ability. I congratulate all members on both sides of the House and the crossbench on their wins and wish them well in the challenges that will confront them in this 57th term of the Queensland parliament.