




Speech By  
**Ros Bates**

**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 28 October 2021

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.09 pm): I rise in this House once again honoured to serve the community of Mudgeeraba for another four years. I thank locals for their enormous support. Despite the statewide election result, we were able to extend our margin in Mudgeeraba on both primary and two-party preferred votes in one of the most volatile elections we have seen in years and with nine candidates running against me. I thank my incredible team of volunteers for their hard work during pre-poll with signage around the electorate—that is, those signs that stayed up and were not damaged by the Mexican hoon cartel—and, of course, on election day. Your efforts and energy were truly humbling and I thank you for all the time you gave to help me in my re-election.

I thank the amazing local sporting clubs and community groups of which I am patron. I hope we can continue working together to make our sporting and broader local communities even better in the years to come. It has been a pleasure to remain involved with you all in the past three years.

I send my thanks to our local schools, which have all elected their school leaders. I hope they will be able to visit the parliament sometime this year. As members would know, normally I have the kids from years 6 and 12 come in but with COVID that has been very difficult. As schools have been closed down at certain periods it was difficult to spend time with school leaders over the past 18 months. To all who are finishing their education, I wish you all the very best for the areas in life you choose and I thank you for your commitment to your school communities. I look forward to meeting and engaging with more students in the coming years, as I have done for the past 13 years.

I thank my staff of the past three years: Fiona, Nikkie, Logan and Taylor. Last but not least I thank my family, although not all of them could be with me this year or even last year. My sisters, Josie and Cathy, were invaluable during this election. My kids, Ben, Greg and Jill, gave support and love from afar. I could not have done it without you and I thank you for your ongoing support.

I thank everyone I have mentioned and the locals of Mudgeeraba for placing their trust in me to continue representing them here in the Queensland parliament. It has been a privilege and a job I take very seriously. Since my election in 2009 we have worked together closely to make our area better and better. I am so grateful to have the opportunity to keep that work going for another three years.

Often I use my address-in-reply speech as a report card to reflect on what I have fought to achieve in the area. Thus far we have fought for important projects for locals including upgrades on Beechmont Road, Springbrook Road and Worongary Road. During my first campaign, when I doorknocked close to 8,000 homes, I built a foundation for what the people of Mudgeeraba want to see in their community. I talked to the people in our area who live and breathe it every day and night. Since the first campaign, our funding tallies are in the millions: more than \$30 million has been secured for schools in the area, almost \$20 million for community groups and more than \$6 million for sporting clubs. We have also managed to fast track and secure projects such as the Nerang fire station, more east-west bus services, the reopening of the Elysium Road overpass and more crossings around the electorate. In fact, the only thing I have not yet achieved in our area is a second state high school west of the M1, which the LNP committed to starting work on at the past two elections.

All of those achievements in our area must be credited in part to the Mudgeeraba Action Group, which was one of the first ways I had of engaging with the community and taking on board the community's wants and needs. Those who make up that group carry deep ties within our part of the Gold Coast and continue to play a key role in the road forward. As any community will know, the more you grow the more issues will show. However, in the 12 years that I have been the member for Mudgeeraba, we have tackled issues head-on to get some serious action. Since my last address-in-reply speech, people power has been the answer to many of the issues we needed fixing in our local community.

We have been able to secure \$34 million to upgrade the Nerang Murwillumbah Road, \$3 million to upgrade Worongary Road and most recently a fifty-fifty state and federal government commitment so that council can build a footpath for the schoolkids in Springbrook. I am so proud to have achieved those projects for my community. The sound barriers we fought for are constructed, as is the newly designed exit 85 ramp extension project, which was much needed. All of those upgrades were achieved with support from locals who want their community to be the best place to live, just like I do. We have worked together to make those projects happen and I have the local community to thank for voicing their concerns to me. We want safer and less congested roads to transport our families around Mudgeeraba.

Whilst I am very proud of my track record in delivering more than \$800 million in road upgrades in my electorate, we still have a long way to go. We want to see projects on Gooding Drive get off the ground. We want dual lanes from Bourton Road to the M1 and traffic lights where the Gooding Drive roundabout is. We announced \$35 million for the Gooding Drive roundabout upgrade prior to the election, but Labor is yet to commit a dollar. We want to see the rest of Worongary Road finally receive the safety upgrades it needs, after the latest upgrade was revealed to be a resurfacing job, which is better than nothing. We want to see an upgrade to the Mudgeeraba and Tallai roads intersection, which has been the scene of many crashes. We want the second M1 built to ease congestion on the southern Gold Coast and throughout the M1 corridor. All of those projects were announced by the LNP at the last election and are well supported in Mudgeeraba. With our area rapidly growing and expanding we need the road infrastructure to keep pace with population growth to ensure that Gold Coast families can continue to enjoy the same lifestyle they have come to know and love.

On the theme of families, I want our families and schoolkids to be able to get to school safely. That is why I have fought so hard for flashing school lights as far out as the Numinbah Valley and at various other locations across the electorate. Our latest announcement, made prior to the election, is for flashing school lights on Eden View Drive, which is one of the busiest thoroughfares in my electorate, as well as on Springbrook Road next to the Mudgeeraba Creek State School. I will continue to fight for those two schools to have flashing lights installed. After fighting for a crossing supervisor, our next focus is on managing traffic through the area and making it as safe as it can be during school pick-up and drop-off times. I will be calling on the Labor government to match our flashing light commitments so that our local students can get to school safely, by car or by foot.

With crime out of control under Labor, residents are rightfully anxious about what the next four years will mean for crime in our area. For many years, hoons have terrorised the hinterland. That was on show during the election campaign, with hundreds of my signs targeted in an attack by a local hooning cartel. I will not take a backward step in the fight to protect our community and stand up for the silent majority, who just want to live, work and spend time with their friends and family in a safe and secure environment. Locals are worried about this issue and, if the track record of the Labor government is anything to go by, we have an uphill battle ahead of us.

In the lead-up to the election, the LNP announced a statewide plan to tackle hooning that involves tougher laws, CCTV cameras and tyre-shredding road surfaces for hooning hotspots. In the Numinbah Valley we also announced—again—\$300,000 to install a permanent CCTV camera at the Pine Creek Road and Nerang Murwillumbah Road intersection, which is a known hooning Mecca. Up to 50 hoons have been known to congregate there. They cloud the air with smoke from their tyres, which impairs the visibility for anyone driving through. That does not take into account the noise, which echoes for miles and keeps locals awake at night. There have been times when locals were assaulted or intimidated on their way through the area, but still we are being ignored. Consecutive ministers have refused to find a solution for this problem. The LNP has announced funding for a fixed camera at the location for the past two elections. We had a plan to get the ball rolling on hooning statewide and now we are calling on the government to do the same. However, after years of inaction our hopes are not high.

Another commitment from the LNP prior to the election was to immediately begin planning a new state high school west of the M1. As members on this side know, that is a commitment that I made in my maiden speech in 2009. It is a commitment I also made as a candidate in 2006. It is a project we

have announced on other occasions. Unfortunately, despite the one state high school in my electorate being almost at capacity and parents calling for another school, we still have not seen the government come to the table with a solution.

The development of the SkyRidge estate, formerly known as Pacific View Estate, means that more young families will be moving to the Mudgeeraba electorate. With Robina State High School landlocked for future development, the solution should be clear. Unfortunately, it is as clear as mud for the Labor government. With eight feeder primary schools and Robina State High School almost at capacity, we need a new high school built now for the kids of the future. I made that commitment in my maiden speech in this parliament and it is something I have never backed down from. Locals can rest assured that I will continue fighting for a new state high school west of the M1, as we have announced at the past two elections.

At this election we also increased our funding commitment for cleaning up the Mudgeeraba Creek from \$50,000 to \$100,000. That was an announcement that I was pleased to make with the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Broadwater. Being the 'green' of the Gold Coast's 'green and gold' comes with a responsibility to look after the natural environment through projects just like this one. Our local landcare groups have worked on this creek for decades and they know it better than anyone else. They have seen the deterioration of the creek over the years and the platypus population declining. We want the platypus and natural wildlife back in the creek where they belong.

Local landcare groups are ready to receive funding to improve the state of our creek, and we were very pleased to announce funding to them for the second election in a row. Unlike Labor, which sent word from Brisbane to demolish our picnic facilities in the Numinbah Valley with bulldozers, we care about maintaining the natural beauty in our area and have committed funding a number of times to our amazing community groups to do this.

The best results come from the community and are executed for the community. That is a principle I have followed throughout my time in parliament. There is something to be said for our community organisations that work quietly to keep our community going. I hope that we can continue to work together as we fight to make our area better every day.

One of our incredible community organisations is My Community Legal in Robina, which provides free legal advice to victims of domestic and family violence and others needing help. At the previous election the LNP committed \$600,000 to this organisation—that is \$600,000 more than Labor. Access to justice is such a fundamentally important issue to support vulnerable local residents and I will continue the fight to ensure funding is provided. This organisation has been overlooked for years now and is the only legal clinic of its kind in Queensland that does not receive funding from the state government. On a Thursday night the queue to get in stretches down the road. That shows how much the community values this service.

I would like to thank Ross and the team for the terrific pro bono work they do to keep our locals informed. They are a fine example of a hardworking community group, and it is very unfortunate that they had been overlooked once again by the Labor government. Indeed, the failed Labor candidate for Mudgeeraba clearly agrees that they should be funded after posting about them on his Facebook page during the election last year. Unfortunately, they have been struggling for some time now, and their client numbers are only increasing. In their first year of opening they provided free legal advice to 649 people. In 2019 it was 1,137 people—almost double. We had hoped that funding, in conjunction with the LNP's tougher proposed laws for domestic violence offenders, could tackle Queensland's and the Gold Coast's domestic violence issues head-on. Queenslanders deserve to feel safe in their own homes. I am still committed to upholding that vision.

Last year, more than ever, our health system was tested. It was tested in terms of its responsiveness, and thankfully we did not need all of the extra capacity, the ventilators and other contingencies at the time because Queensland's COVID case numbers have been relatively low compared to other states and countries. Queenslanders have done an outstanding job in listening to the advice, doing their best to help suppress the virus. Our state's response to COVID and dealing with the global pandemic is only as good as how the advice is followed and, by and large, Queenslanders have done everything that has been asked of them.

Our health heroes have just been amazing. First and foremost, they have bravely continued to undertake their roles to provide world-class public health care to Queensland families. They have put themselves first, as they always do, and put their lives on the line. As a nurse and as someone who has profound respect for our health workers, because I know firsthand the dedication they show and the sacrifices they make, I pay tribute to our nurses, midwives, paramedics, doctors, wardies, allied health professionals and other health staff, who all deserve our admiration and thanks for their commitment.

In my role as shadow minister for health and ambulance services, medical research and women, I will continue to hold the government to account, provide alternative policies and ensure election commitments are delivered. Good government for the people of Queensland is delivered by a strong opposition and, while we may be fewer in numbers, we are as determined as ever. We will continue to put patients first and ensure their health services are the government's priority—not wasting money renaming hospitals or on failed IT projects. Promised hospital upgrades need to be delivered on time and on budget. Promised service upgrades need to be implemented with the support of staff and extra training needed. Over the next 12 months, the focus will obviously be on the rollout of the vaccines and any future developments in that space.

The vaccination rollout is gathering pace, supported by medical research right here in Queensland and across the world. It heralds a new chapter in the fight against the virus. I look forward to continuing to meet with and support the fine medical research institutions and scientists we have here in Queensland, not only for their work on COVID but also on their many other important projects as well.

We will not sit by over the next three years and rubberstamp government policy, legislation and initiatives. While good decisions can be supported, our role is to scrutinise government decision-making and suggest alternative approaches. While the government may not like it, that is our role, and that is what we will do strongly. We will not sit by and let patients languish on long waiting lists. We will not sit by and watch ambulance ramping hit record levels. We will not sit by and watch hospital projects delayed or IT failure after failure wasting taxpayers' money. We will not sit by and watch maternity services slashed in the bush. We will not sit by and watch the ice crisis continue. We will not sit by and watch nurses scapegoated or ministers hiding behind bureaucrats.

The health and welfare of Queenslanders deserves a government with a laser-like focus on best practice service delivery and world-class patient care, and that is what we will push for each and every day over the next three years. We will give a voice to the voiceless and shine a light on issues and failures in government administration that the Queensland Health spin doctors work so hard to hide and bury. We will continue to stand up for people like Ray from Hervey Bay, who needed a shoulder operation, or Kate Yeoman from Far North Queensland, who had to go public after waiting eight years needing reconstructive surgery following a double mastectomy and a battle with breast cancer, or the community mental health services in South Brisbane that lost funding and were concerned about how they were going to keep their doors open and provide vital local mental health care while taking the pressure off the local public hospitals, or Ralph from my electorate, who was on the list to see a specialist for more than 240 days and was told he had another 500-plus days to wait for his urgent hip surgery. Ralph was a category 2 patient, which means he should not have been waiting more than 90 days for surgery. Thanks to our advocacy, he finally received his treatment. It was about the support given to Jayne Brown from the Sunshine Coast, who could not even get access to a microwave oven in hotel quarantine to heat her wheat pack so she could have some temporary pain relief after undergoing life-saving brain surgery.

These are the people who matter and the issues that matter to Queenslanders. I will continue fighting for those people and raising their issues. That is my commitment to the people of Queensland and particularly the people of Mudgeeraba.