




Speech By
James Martin

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (6.02 pm): I start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. It is an honour and a privilege to continue to represent the great electorate of Stretton in this House. My local community is the best part of Queensland to live in. It is diverse, energetic and dynamic. There is always something going on in the Stretton electorate. I want to sincerely thank my community for their support once again. It is not something that I take for granted. I will continue to work hard for them in this House and I will not let them down.

Being elected for the first time in the 2021 by-election was a great honour and being re-elected in this, my first general election, is an even greater honour. If my first term in parliament taught me anything, it was the importance of putting the community first—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Stretton, I am sorry to interrupt you. It is not your maiden speech, so there is no special treatment. However, if members could be a little bit quieter for the member on his feet, that would be appreciated.

Mr MARTIN: I will not start again. If my first term in parliament taught me anything, it was the importance of putting the community first, caring about the lives of the people you represent and being there for people when they need it most. Ultimately, the member of parliament is there to serve the community and not the other way around. We are servants of our local communities and are ultimately answerable to them.

I congratulate all honourable members who were elected or re-elected to this House and I wish them all the best for the 58th Parliament. I also want to acknowledge the members and friends who did not make it back to this place along with candidates who did not quite make it. They all fought hard for what they believed in to make Queensland a better place to live and work. I wish them all the best for their future.

I am proud to be a member of the ALP, which stands for dignity at work and decent, well-paid, secure jobs; an ALP that stands for universal health care and good schools for all Queenslanders not just those who can afford them; one that protects our environment and provides cheap public transport, free TAFE and free kindy; and finally, an ALP that stands for equality and dignity for everyone regardless of their gender, sexuality, race, religion or age.

An election loss is a time for reflection by all members of the party. Over nine years of Labor government we have much to be proud of. Under the leadership of the former premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, we saved our state's Public Service from the short-lived disaster of the Newman government, secured the 2032 Olympics and protected our borders during the COVID pandemic. The leadership of Steven Miles brought renewed vigour in the final year of government and over the last year we delivered targeted reforms to improve the day-to-day life of Queenslanders—reforms like 50-cent public transport fares and cost-of-living relief. These reforms were backed up by a clear fiscal strategy ensuring that Queenslanders extracted a fair price from multinational corporations that are mining our natural resources.

Every member of the former government can be proud of our legacy. We are proud of the campaign we ran and I give credit to the former premier for running a strong campaign on Labor principles. While we were not ultimately successful, I am proud of our platform and the fight that we took up to the LNP. In politics you must accept the will of the public. The voters are the boss after all and ultimately they always get it right. While I acknowledge the good work done by the Labor government and former premier Steven Miles, the people of Queensland have chosen the LNP to lead them for the next four years.

After an election loss there is always a need for reflection, but the overriding need of the Queensland people is an opposition that will hold the government to account. In taking government, the LNP has made a lot of promises. When under pressure in a TV debate, the new Premier promised to reduce the number of victims of crime and said he will resign if he does not deliver. I say to the Premier that we will hold him to account to deliver on this promise. The LNP also promised to reduce ambulance ramping somehow by producing real-time data. Queenslanders will be very interested to see how that works. Again, I say to the LNP and the Premier that we will hold them to account to deliver on this promise.

The LNP promised not to criminalise abortion, and I am very aware that this is a controversial topic within the LNP. Indeed, the LNP candidate for Stretton herself openly told voters that there was a secret LNP plan. In fact, her exact words were, 'You trust me. I can't say anything yet because we have got to get elected before we do anything.' Time will tell what happens on this issue but be assured we will hold the government to account to deliver on their promise not to recriminalise abortion.

The LNP have also promised to build more houses. However, one of their first actions was to call off a housing development that would have delivered over 650 new homes on the Gold Coast. The LNP have also said they will respect Queenslanders' money, yet they have already announced they will waste time and money on a vain political policy to rename Queensland's very successful satellite hospitals. The LNP have said they will listen to the experts but seemingly they have already ignored the experts when it comes to pill testing. I say to the LNP government not only will the Labor opposition hold them to account for each and every promise they have made, but the people of Queensland will be keenly watching them as well. The LNP government has promised big things and now it is up to them to deliver.

One of the positive notes of this election is that of all 93 members elected to the 58th Parliament, none were members of One Nation. I certainly hope it remains that way. For more than 25 years now Pauline Hanson and One Nation have sought to divide our communities for their own political gain, blaming all the problems we face on immigrants. They have singled out Asian and Muslim Australians, claiming they are somehow not Australian enough. When ordinary Australians stand up to One Nation, does Pauline Hanson engage in reasonable political debate? No. Instead she uses legal threats to try to silence her critics—hardly an advocate for free speech. It is even more disappointing then that, given this, the LNP continues to preference One Nation. It is all well and good to say you support multicultural communities, but the LNP should commit to putting One Nation last on its how-to-vote cards. Labor will always put One Nation last.

I am extremely proud to represent so many Aussies who have come from all around the world to settle in the electorate of Stretton—people from China, Taiwan, South-East Asia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Middle East and Africa—and people of all faiths: Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Muslims. The truth is that they all make great Australians. On that note, I want to acknowledge the first person of Islamic faith to be elected to the Queensland parliament: the new member for Sandgate, Bisma Asif. It was great to see you take the oath yesterday on the Koran and it was great to see you make your first speech today in this place. It is yet another barrier broken down and a fine reflection of our diverse multicultural community.

In my electorate of Stretton I am proud to continue to represent the most multicultural electorate of this state, the electorate that has the highest number of people born overseas and more people speaking a language other than English at home. As I have said before, my local area is a place of great cultural celebration. You can eat your way around the world in the Stretton electorate, although quite often the food has a little bit too much chilli in it so always ask for them to put in a bit less if you cannot handle spicy food! While we are a diverse community, there are so many points of similarity. In our diversity we have a lot in common. People in Stretton value hard work, family and education. For a new community on the outskirts of Brisbane we punch above our weight, with above-average outcomes in education and job prospects. Indeed, the reason that so many people have settled in Stretton is to secure a better life for themselves and, most importantly, their children.

What I consistently hear from parents of all backgrounds is the pride they have in their children, who are often studying medicine, law, dentistry, engineering, pharmacy, IT or accounting. There is pride that their children were at TAFE pursuing a vital trade or setting up a small business in our local area. This is the key common unifying factor across the community. Parents want the best for their children and want to see them succeed in securing a decent job, pursuing their chosen career and carving out a future for themselves and their families. However, we cannot forget that not all children come from supportive homes. Some go hungry. Some suffer neglect or, worse, become victims themselves. Some lose hope and turn to crime, and as members we must work to give them hope and not forget that they are children.

Many locals come from countries where a decent education is not a guarantee, where getting sick can cost you your life savings, where the air and rivers are polluted, where the economy only works for a privileged few or where politics might not be stable or, if it is stable, not particularly free. Over the years many new Australians in the Stretton community have commented to me about how strange it is that they could get close to a politician, how strange it is that a politician could be walking around the streets not surrounded by rings of security or police or how strange it is for people to be able to access their local politician through meetings at their office, in the community or on the phone. This democratic access is something we should protect. The experience of so many in my community illustrates that we can never take this or the sanctity of free and fair elections for granted. As the local member for Stretton, I will always have my door open to the community.

As a local MP I am proud to have delivered important local upgrades and improvements for our community including upgrades to Beaudesert Road and Illaweena Street; building the Eight Mile Plains Satellite Hospital, which has been popular with locals; securing funding to remove the Kuraby level crossing and the Coopers Plains level crossing; and making TAFE free, especially for the many who study at the Acacia Ridge TAFE in my electorate. This is a policy that has improved the lives of workers, students and their families and I am proud to have played a role in that. TAFE is great.

I am also proud to have delivered upgrades and new classrooms to every school in Stretton—all of which are now air-conditioned—and I strongly believe in the transformative power of education. Good state schools with good learning facilities and well-supported teachers are the most important thing we can deliver for our young people. On that note, I did want to acknowledge the hard work of Labor's education ministers over my time in this place—Grace Grace, the member for McConnel, and Di Farmer, the member for Bulimba.

Finally, I want to say a few thank-yous. The first of those is to my family: my son, Ollie; my partner, Claire; my mum and dad; my brother, Patrick, and my sister, Sarah. Thanks so much for all of your support, especially over this first term. I could not do it without you. It was great to have Mum and Dad here yesterday to see the opening of parliament. Dad especially gets a kick out of it. He is a long-term union delegate at Hastings Deering and he often tells me that he cannot get over the fact that his son has become a Labor MP. He always reminds me that the only reason I am here is because of the hard work of union members—and they, after all, make up the union.

Thank you to my campaign manager, Adam Chappell. He is always as cool as a cucumber when I am making unreasonable demands. Thanks, mate. Thank you to my campaign committee: Councillor Emily Kim, David Pass, Merric Foley and David Shaw. Thank you to the mighty union movement, especially the United Workers Union, for its help on the campaign and secretary Gary Bullock, Greg Moran, Jake Araullo, Connor Wood and the whole UWU team. It is great to be part of a union that has such an impressive capacity to campaign for its members. Thank you to ALP head office: President, John Battams; State Secretary, Kate Flanders; assistant secretary, Zach Beers; and organisers Hayden Sheppard and Meredith Newman for your hard work. I am also very lucky to have two local federal Labor MPs in Jim Chalmers and Graham Perrett. They are both fantastic local members. Thank you for your assistance. I also note that Graham Perrett will not contest the next election as he has announced his retirement. I thank him for his service to our community. He is a fantastic hardworking local member. All the best for your future, Graham, and I look forward to working as hard as I can to keep Moreton Labor in the upcoming federal election supporting Julie-Ann Campbell—a fantastic candidate.

Thank you to the president of the mighty Stretton branch of the ALP, Sherif Keryakas, as well as the many volunteers who helped on the campaign: Aryan Sharma; Nicholas Trinh; Hudson Denning; Joel Krattinger; Fahima Ahmadi; Sathmi Herath; Kalliope Pass; Eric Liu; Adan and Shafaq Ansari; Semisi Manu; Samuel Zhou; Anieka, Genna and Jim McDonagh; Daniel Phelps; Teng and Michael Murray; George and Xander Addison; Prakruthi Gururaj; Tirat Achal and Master Ji; Alwin Joseph; Sudha Bhalla; Nirupma and Avnish Bhardwaz; Kerrie Kahlon; Chaïy Donati; Gigi Bruno; Lucinda and Ryan Chappell; Rob Donald; Jannette Jennings; Soo Kim; Jim Lazzarini; Lewis Lee OAM; Sandy Luc; Nora Mansor-Clark; Jason McAulay; Hazel Hubbard; Paul Shibu; Sukhjinder Singh; Hardeep Wagla; Shaji

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A special thank you to everyone who helped me out on the day on the Kuraby booth: Syed Naqvi, Faiz Ahmed, Galila Abdelsalam, Mubunga and Mangaiko Baruti, Mudassar and Muneer. Thanks also to my hardworking Chinese volunteers led by Aunty Dong Dong, who is very well known in our community, as well as Dahan, Qingshan Tan, Boping Zhou, Happy Ping, Xinguang Liu, Zhangchuan Zhen, Xiaohua Huang, Jianmin Ca, Dehua Xu, Jiuhong Tao, Xiaoyun Hua, Jenny Zhang and Rylan Ma. Also a big thanks to supporters Mannu Kala, Bhazhad Aslam, Dr Yahya Khan, Maria Zia, Paviter Noor, Clinton Debruyne and Courtney Talbot.

Lastly, I want to thank the good people of Stretton for their support. I will continue to be your humble servant and will not hesitate to stand up for you in this House on important issues.