




Speech By
Janelle Poole

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mrs POOLE** (Mundingburra—LNP) (5.06 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, members of this esteemed House and people of Queensland, it is with immense pride that I stand here to deliver my maiden speech as the representative for the electorate of Mundingburra. To the people of Mundingburra, thank you for placing your trust in me. This role is both an honour and a responsibility I will never take lightly. I am here because of you—your hopes, your challenges and your belief in a fresh start for Mundingburra.

Let me tell you a little bit about Mundingburra. The Mundingburra electorate is a microcosm of Queensland itself. It is a place where diversity, resilience and community spirit shine brightly. It is a vibrant community housing some of Australia's and Queensland's most important infrastructure.

The seat of Mundingburra is home to a proud and deeply rooted defence community, anchored by the presence of Lavarack Barracks, one of the largest military bases in Australia. Our community is enriched by the men and women who serve in the Australian Defence Force as well as their families who contribute so much to the fabric of our region. I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to our service men and women. Their dedication, sacrifice and unwavering commitment to the security of our nation inspire us all. They represent the best of what it means to serve and, as their representative, I will work to ensure that their needs and the needs of their families are met with the respect and the support that they deserve.

For those who have served and are transitioning into civilian life, I will advocate for greater access to mental health services, employment opportunities and programs that honour your contributions. Mundingburra can lead the way as a welcoming and supportive community for our veterans. Defence industries are also vital to our local community. I will advocate for investment that drives partnerships with local businesses, creates jobs and ensures that Mundingburra benefits from our role in supporting national security.

Another pillar of the Mundingburra community is the Townsville University Hospital—a world-class facility that serves not only Mundingburra but also the broader North Queensland and Far North Queensland regions. It is the largest tertiary hospital in Northern Australia. It provides critical healthcare services, supports groundbreaking research and trains the next generation of our healthcare professionals. I want to take this moment to recognise the incredible doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and support staff who work tirelessly to provide high-quality care to our community. You are the heart of our healthcare system and we are deeply grateful for your dedication. What you have lacked is a government that has supported you over the last 10 years. The LNP will support you moving forward.

With its connection to the James Cook University, the Townsville University Hospital is a hub for innovation and medical research. I will support the partnerships and investment that position Mundingburra as a leader in medical advancements and the training of our healthcare professionals. No mention of Mundingburra would be complete without recognising the vital role played by the James

Cook University—a cornerstone of education and research in North Queensland. JCU is not just a university; it is a beacon of opportunity, innovation and global leadership in areas such as tropical health, environmental science and marine biology. The students, researchers and staff at JCU contribute immensely to our community and beyond, shaping the leaders and solutions of tomorrow. As the university continues to grow, so too does its positive impact on Mundingburra and the broader region.

This may come as a surprise to members, but Mundingburra and the broader Townsville area is a massive sporting city. We love our sport. In the seat of Mundingburra we have the Murray Sporting Complex—soccer, netball, hockey, cricket, AFL, a cycling velodrome, a skate park, darts and basketball. It sounds like we could have the Olympic Games there. What if? Thousands of players attend their chosen sport every single week during their season.

The Townsville stadium is also host to the multi premiership winning WNBL team the Townsville Fire. Of course, running through the heart of the beautiful seat of Mundingburra is the mighty Ross River, a hub of activity both on and off the water—rowing, skiing, swimming and fishing. They are only freshwater crocodiles; you will be fine! We have cyclists, we have runners and, of course, it is the home of the Aplins Weir parkrun. Bring your runners when you come to visit!

Mundingburra is more than just my electorate; it is my home. I was raised here, was educated here, played sport here—that is a given—and have worked here for the past 28 years as a serving police officer. I grew up in Berontha Street, Cranbrook, in the heart of the Mundingburra electorate. I carry today some of my fondest memories of Berontha Street—memories such as running down the driveway when I was three to see the greengrocer or the milkman. They home-delivered every week back then. I actually think that was probably the earliest form of Uber Eats—54 years ago. There are memories such as visiting our neighbours and collecting their buffalo turf runners and bringing them home so that Mum and Dad could plant them of an afternoon. That is what we did back then to get a lawn. There are memories such as walking through a bush track from Berontha Street—watching out for the snakes; you always carried a stick—to get to Ross River Road to catch the bus to the Aitkenvale Primary School. I would always stop and eat the Chinee apples on the way and then I would be sitting in class with a bellyache because some of them were a little bit too green. But do you know what? I would do it again the next day as well. I learned to swim in the Aitkenvale Primary School pool and was amongst one of the youngest in the state back in 1979 to get the Surf Life Saving bronze medallion in year 7, alongside Helen Watson, who is a friend of mine to this day. It seems I have always loved a bit of a challenge.

Years 8 to 12 were spent at the Heatley State High School. I was only the second in my family to finish year 12, behind my older sister. Heatley State High School taught me humility and taught me resilience. Saturdays: guess what they were for? Sport, of course. There was hockey in the morning and tennis in the afternoon. Sundays were the day for exploration. All the local kids would gather together on our bikes. You have all done it. You are having memories yourselves. We would gather on our bikes and off we would go. We would go exploring for the day. There were only ever two rules: you had to be home for lunch and you had to be back before the streetlights came on. Trust me: if you were not, there were consequences for actions.

In 1994 I joined the Queensland Police Service and returned to Townsville, where I spent the next 28 years proudly serving and protecting the community—general duties, Juvenile Aid Bureau, PCYC and, finally, as the officer in charge of the Townsville District Crime Prevention Unit. I take this moment to acknowledge my fellow former officers here in the chamber and thank them for their service and commitment to the community. Thank you so very much.

To my fellow brothers and sisters in blue: I commend you for the critical work you do on a daily basis. I know the jobs that you have been to and the impact that they have on you. I have stood with you at some of those jobs. Thank you for your commitment to upholding justice, maintaining order and ensuring the safety of everyone around you. Your work does not go unnoticed. In 2015 I was very privileged to receive the prestigious Australian Police Medal.

I have been an ambassador for the Daniel Morcombe Foundation for over 10 years. Next year the foundation commemorates 20 years. It is exceptionally important that we continue the work of Bruce and Denise Morcombe and the Daniel Morcombe Foundation: educating our young people on how to keep themselves safe—recognise, react, report; supporting the victims of crime; and, of course, most importantly, honouring the memory of Daniel Morcombe.

I am going to move on to some thankyou's, so stay with me. It would be remiss of me not to thank the former member for Mundingburra, Mr Les Walker. I acknowledge his contribution to the community and I wish him and his family well for the future. Leigh Kefford, my campaign manager: your unwavering support, knowledge and patience—most importantly your patience—throughout the past 12 months

have been nothing short of phenomenal. To my campaign team and volunteers I say a massive thank you once again for the time you have all given freely. Your contributions helped us win the seat of Mundingburra. To my friends and extended family I say a heartfelt thank you for your support, your encouragement, your friendship and your assistance.

Mr Peter Lindsay—yes, election campaigns are like roller-coasters, Peter. Thank you for being part of the Mundingburra campaign. Thank you for your advice, your guidance and your friendship. Mr Dave Tindale is a friend for over 20 years and a long-time volunteer in a number of community programs. He is a man of the highest integrity and moral standing. Nothing was ever a problem during the campaign. Whether it was roadsiding or 6 am set-ups and 6 pm pack-ups every day for pre-polling—not a problem. Thank you, Dave, for your guidance, your knowledge and your friendship.

The last LNP member for Mundingburra was none other than our now Premier, Mr David Crisafulli, a man of vision and integrity who believes in the value of hard work and the principle of ‘do as you would be done by’. I have done my homework! There were too many occasions to count while I was out doorknocking the Mundingburra electorate when the residents would say, ‘The last politician to knock on our door was David Crisafulli.’ That is a huge testament to the drive and discipline of our Premier. I am honoured to be the new member for Mundingburra, following in his footsteps.

To my fellow members for Thuringowa and Townsville: congratulations. You both bring with you skills and knowledge that will greatly benefit your electorates.

To my husband, Darren, and daughters, Kirby and Jenna: I am here today because of your support and your unconditional love. This has been your journey as much as it has been mine. I am here because of your incredible support. This moment also belongs to you.

To my mum and dad—my dad passed seven years ago. He was a man who worked one job his whole life. He was a linesman with Ergon Energy in Townsville for over 40 years. I daresay there are a number of apprentices out there who would remember his unique training methods, but that was long before there were any workplace health and safety regulations. My dad was a tough man, a man who said what he thought, a man who gave back to his community, but he protected his family fiercely. He raised three daughters to have thick hides and broad shoulders, to love Rugby League and cricket, and to stand up for what you believe in.

To my mum, whom we lost five months ago—we thought Dad was tough! Mum was the one who kept the family running. When money was tight she would take in ironing. She would do house cleaning. We never had a lot but we had everything we needed. There were many nights when dinner was tomato sandwiches but they were the best tomato sandwiches we ever tasted. Mum taught us the importance of following through on your commitments, always giving back to your community, respecting the opinions of others and, more importantly, having the ability to laugh at yourself. Thank you both for your love and support. I will do my best every day to make you proud—and, Dad, I will always play with a straight bat.

During the election campaign I knocked on thousands of doors and listened to the residents’ stories—people who were too scared to leave their homes, people who were too scared to stay in their homes. I listened to stories of people who had been waiting on elective surgery lists for years as their health deteriorated, of young families unable to enter the housing market, of employed people living in their cars because they could not afford to pay rent, and of people who had to choose between paying their electricity bill or feeding their family.

I have listened to your stories. You have been heard. We as an LNP government are committed to making our community safer, providing easier access to health services, easing the cost of living and securing our housing foundations.

As I take my place in this chamber, I do so with the deepest respect for its history and purpose. This House represents the voices of all Queenslanders, and it is my solemn duty to ensure the voice of Mundingburra is heard loudly and clearly. To the people of Mundingburra, my door will always be open to you. Your stories, your challenges and your successes will be at the heart of everything I do.