



Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.25 pm): In my first speech this term I want to start by acknowledging that we stand today on the land of the Yagara and Turrbal people and pay my respects to their elders past and present and to acknowledge them as our First Australians and the traditional owners and custodians of these lands.

I would also like to congratulate the member for Condamine on his appointment as Speaker in the 58th Parliament. I congratulate all returning members and welcome our newest members across the chamber. I do want to acknowledge the member for Capalaba, Russell Field. Russell and I share the unique experience that we have both lost people we love to homicide. It is a rare insight that the member for Capalaba and I bring, and I look forward to again this term ensuring that the views of all victims are heard and that the many promises made to victims by this government are delivered as promised.

I also want to acknowledge those members who did not return—people who over the last four years I developed some really genuine friendships with. They are people like the former member for Caloundra, Jason Hunt, who I worked on committee with; the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui, who was with me on the temporary Speakers panel; and the member for Pumicestone, Ali King, who was my chamber neighbour. These members worked really hard and, regrettably, it was not their day. I do want to wish all of our former colleagues every success in their next chapter.

But, Mr Speaker, I'm back, baby, and I am so excited to be back. It is an incredible honour and privilege to serve. Very few people ever have an opportunity like this. Four years ago I promised to not waste a day or to take this role or our people for granted. I stand here today and again make that same solemn promise to this House and to my constituents.

Naturally I want to thank my community, which has put their trust and their confidence in me again. I have had really difficult times in my life, but it would be a mistake to think that I have had a terrible life. I have had the most dynamic and exciting life I could have ever hoped for, and being elected as the member for Cooper stands out as one of the highlights. We are temporary stewards of these roles, so the important thing is to respect the role, to respect our people, to diligently represent their views, to listen, to serve, to take nothing and no-one for granted, and to be honest and bold.

My team and our community have achieved a lot in our last term—annual ecoforums where we brought together thought leaders for a sustainable future and our annual small business awards which celebrate the many passionate business owners and operators. We have organised capacity-building forums for sporting and community groups, as well as attending hundreds of local events—colour runs, school graduations, AGMs, business openings, art exhibitions and working bees.

These events do not just happen. It takes a genuine partnership between our office and our community—our small businesses, our schools, our sporting and community groups, our creatives, our conservationists—all of us working together towards the shared belief that communities prosper when we put aside our differences, roll up our sleeves and get good stuff done.

I am proud of my team that helped to deliver a strong outcome in the seat of Cooper. However, we on this side now find ourselves in opposition, and it does fall to us to ensure the government lives up to its promises to reduce crime, reduce victim numbers, deliver affordable housing and Olympic infrastructure, reduce household and business insurance premiums, while also discontinuing Queensland's coal royalties scheme, which nets our state \$8 billion, and promising to lower state spending.

All of our electorates are special to us and I would like to share what makes the people of Cooper so wonderful to represent. Referred to as an inner-city electorate, our people are sometimes described by others as wealthy, privileged or even elite. It is true that it is not cheap to live within 10 kilometres of the city. Many of our people are professional working families, working huge hours to give their families the greatest life they can have—often a life that their parents could not afford to give them. For these families, issues like the state of the economy, job availability, housing affordability and a clear and bold vision for Queensland really matter.

We knocked on the doors of almost 20,000 homes during our campaign and we found that everyone was concerned about cost of living and housing availability and affordability. Whether it was a student or a hospitality worker struggling to find somewhere secure to rent, a young family struggling to afford their first home, or older parents who would like to one day turn their 25-year-old's bedroom into a creative arts studio and need them to move out, housing availability and affordability in our electorate is perhaps the No. 1 issue. I was really proud of Labor's Homes for Queenslanders plan—a plan to build a million homes by 2046. I acknowledge that the government have adopted that plan and stated they will deliver those homes two years earlier. I think that is fantastic and I know that our electorate will welcome that. I look forward to monitoring and providing updates to my community on the government's progress on that and sincerely wish the housing minister well on progressing a really important outcome.

Our community places a high value on education, with many moving into the area for our schools. In my four-year term I was really proud to secure over \$40 million in investments for our local schools—for new STEAM buildings and additional classrooms, and all schools now have air conditioning and solar. I have also secured funding for tuckshop expansions and greater disability access. I note through the government's ministerial charter letters that the government has adopted the Labor government's policies around free kindy, additional support to teachers including a workforce strategy and a commitment to boost teacher aide numbers by 550. Labor's work on the provision of a healthy school lunch program and targeted work to support schools manage an inclusive approach to students with additional needs has also been adopted by the new government. I am pleased to see that.

We have a number of families in our community who would like to see a broader suite of education facilities, including flexi schools and dedicated schools for children with special needs. In my previous term I was able to finalise work that the former member, Kate Jones, had commenced on the amalgamation of the Red Hill Special School. Relocating onto Fulcher Road, we are now in the enviable position of having a school that will be freed up and available potentially in 2026. Prior to the election I was able to secure an agreement with the department that this Waterworks Road site would remain a special needs school. It is no secret that I would like the government to use this site to establish Brisbane's first dedicated autism school for the inner city, and I hope the government will honour this commitment.

I welcome the LNP's commitment to work actively to re-engage students who may not be attending school. I am interested in how that commitment will interact with their proposed zero-tolerance policy on violence, vapes and drugs and how those policies interact with some of the government's other proposed reforms around restricting drug diversion, removing pill testing and, of course, their proposed youth crime sentencing framework. I have written to the minister requesting a meeting to brief him on the current needs of our schools, including the overwhelming desire in our community for a new library for The Gap State School which could in fact benefit the entire Gap community. This innovative idea formed a key part of our election campaign, and I would welcome the opportunity to work with the new minister to deliver this for the good people of The Gap.

This issue of shared and a more effective use of resources is a key concern of mine and our people. One of the greatest challenges facing inner-city seats is a contest for space: how do we simultaneously construct more homes, protect green space and build the infrastructure—bike paths,

libraries and community centres—that our people want us to invest in? One of the key infrastructure issues is the provision of sporting facilities. We have a number of great sporting groups in our community which are juggling clubhouses, their fields and shared car parks, but they are struggling with access to sportsgrounds and facilities. Many of our clubs have now had to cap their player numbers, which has resulted in many locals being unable to take part in sport or having to join a club outside of their community and spend hours travelling halfway up and down the coast. If we are to deliver a world-class Olympics, we have to invest heavily in our local clubs across all regions, including the inner city.

As members would know, I am a big supporter of Sporting Wheelies, and I want to particularly call out the need to look at investing in additional infrastructure for sports for people with a disability. Sporting Wheelies operates out of Milton in my electorate. It is a custom-built facility that was funded by the former Labor government. My daughter Albie often trains down there with the wheelchair basketball program on a Tuesday night. Albie is able-bodied, but because the barriers for people with a disability are so great they struggle for numbers. In fact, able-bodied people can train with the Queensland wheelchair basketball teams right up to nationals level, which gives you a sense of the hill we have to climb if we are to meet our IOC obligation of half a million people with a disability engaged in sport by 2032.

Finally, a key priority for my residents is the urgent and ongoing need to decarbonise Queensland, to halt the effects of climate change, to invest heavily in restoring the biodiversity of our natural spaces. I think it is fair to say that I and many of my constituents are nervous about an LNP government in relation to this policy area. The last time the LNP were in government in Queensland land clearing doubled, our wild rivers legislation was revoked and our national parks were opened up to developers.

I also want to correct the record in relation to material distributed by the Greens in my electorate during the election campaign. This material claimed that Labor had been involved in the approval of 27 coalmines in Queensland. That information was not correct. In fact, our Energy and Jobs Plan included the transition of coal-fired power stations to renewable energy hubs. It was recognised as the most ambitious decarbonisation plan in the country and, importantly, we had underwritten it with \$3 billion in direct investment and a jobs guarantee.

Climate change is not just an inner-city, woke, left ideology. There are compelling economic arguments to drive down rising global temperatures. Independent reports have climate change costing Australia \$423 billion over the next 40 years, and Queensland will bear the brunt of that. Lost productivity, increased natural disasters, agricultural impacts and widespread species loss, water security, water quality and, notably, the impacts this will have on our primary industries and tourism sectors are key issues that not just my community but all Queensland communities should care about, so I am concerned that there is no mention of climate considerations under the ministerial charters for primary industries, water or local government, and the only mention about the environment in the environment minister's charter relates to growing Queensland's ecotourism.

In the previous term, the Labor government held a parliamentary inquiry into the impacts of climate change on Queensland's agricultural production. Farmers for Climate Action submitted to that committee—

Queensland, more than other states and territories, has greater exposure to the impacts of climate change.

...

Climate change poses a serious and ongoing risk to the Australian agricultural sector's viability ...

This is clearly an important area that the government needs to be investing in now and into the future.

I am monitoring the time. I should have rehearsed my speech because time is slipping away and I want to get to the important part, which is the thankyou's. I will skip a little bit in my speech and if I have time I am going to come back to it, which is a typical Jonty approach of being disorganised. I am going to get to the thankyou's, and I do have a lot of people to thank. I want to start by acknowledging my incredible team. I cannot rave enough about our Team Jonty campaign team. Connor Wood, my campaign director, is phenomenal. Connor is wise beyond his years. His political knowledge and instinct are profound. For four years we kept our outputs locally really positive and professional and we represented the people of Cooper with integrity. We wanted to maintain that approach in the campaign and Connor really understood and nailed that.

Greg Moran, Jake Araullo, Vicki Ryan, Tyler Rolls, Sam Dolan, Clare Webster, Dan Boyd, Paula Ridler and Bob Hill—we had such an incredible campaign team who kept me focused. They worked hard to maintain the integrity of what we wanted to achieve, which was to focus on our achievements

and our positive plans for the future. They kept me sane, and I am so grateful for that. The former member for Cooper, Kate Jones, is such a champion of women in politics. She is my strategist, my therapist, my mentor and my friend, and I was grateful again for her support on this campaign.

The United Workers Union again played a key role in my re-election. I thank Gary Bullock for his support and his encouragement and belief in my wild ideas. I also acknowledge the ALP state secretary, Kate Flanders, and my organiser, Hayden Sheppard. We have a strong and growing Labor membership in Cooper supported by eight branches. All of our branches really lifted in this campaign. I thank presidents John Laing, Terry Evans, Danny Bevis, PJ, Robyn Stevens, Ron Frame and Madonna Jarrett and all the branch members and all the Labor members who came out for months to doorknock, to make phone calls and to stand on the side of the road and wave at cars with me, giving up time with their families because they believed in the power of a Labor government. We had a number of young people helping on our campaign which was phenomenal to see. I do want to single out two: Angus Healy and Aidan Ameer, who were absolute weapons and are such passionate Labor supporters. It was really wonderful seeing them flourish in the campaign.

The Greens threw everything at my seat, but what I noticed was that very few of their volunteers were from our local area. In fact, most were from outside the electorate and from interstate. In contrast, Team Jonty drew in so many locals. Small business owners, teachers, artists, professionals, coaches of local sporting clubs and cafe owners who had never campaigned for a politician before came out and supported us, and I want to thank them so much.

We had over 200 volunteers out on election day alone and many more through the campaign, including people who just threw on a Jonty T-shirt during their lunchbreak and came out to help. When I asked people what motivated them to join in on the campaign, their common response was something like, 'I don't really know much about politics, I couldn't even tell you what party you are with, but you are a great local member and we don't want to lose you.' Above all else, this role is about service to others. Being a good local member cuts through every political preference and I think is the reason why we returned such a strong swing towards us in Cooper. I am really proud of what our team achieved—a generous swing during a difficult election.

I do not have time to do more of my speech, but that is okay. I have saved the best for last—my friends, who are my greatest cheerleaders, and, of course, my family. It would be impossible for me to be here without my partner of almost 14 years—which is crazy—Matthew Bashford. Matt is my world. He puts up with my crazy ideas, my early mornings, my vegan stealth attacks on his diet, my messy car and my floordrobe. He puts up with me when I walk in late and interrupt his movie to insist we can only watch a horror instead, only then to spend an hour on my phone. He is an absolute legend, and I really am the luckiest person in the world to have him and to have our four daughters—Grace, Annie, Ella and Albie—who are fierce and formidable women. Albie is quickly becoming a passionate Labor supporter. Her views on rival political parties are well formed and quite unparliamentary, so I will not be able to repeat them, but I cannot wait to see—

Mrs Frecklington: Oh, Jonty!

Ms BUSH: I do not know where she gets it from, Deb. I cannot wait to see what all these young women do. In the final moment I have, I do want to acknowledge people who are no longer here with us—my dad and my sister, Jacinta, who I do not talk about all the time but I know would be very proud of what I have achieved and very proud of the work we are doing and the role that I am playing; my broader family—my mum and my brother. Families are very complicated and we probably do have a complicated relationship. Probably Russell, more than anyone, would understand what grief is like and how that can change the dynamics of families, but I do love them very much, and I do know that, despite everything, they are very proud of me. It is such an honour to be here. I look forward to working with everyone in this chamber over the 58th term of parliament. Thank you.