




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (9.12 pm): On Christmas Day 2023, a great storm struck the southern parts of Logan and the northern parts of the electorate of Scenic Rim. Across the southern edge of Logan and into Scenic Rim, it wreaked absolute devastation. It was a very narrow but extraordinarily intense path, and the storm destroyed so much in its path that, at least temporarily, locals felt hopeless before the power of nature. However, it was hardly light the next day, and in some cases before light, when members of the community were out there with chainsaws helping clear driveways and the roads and helping out neighbours.

One heartwarming story that I heard that I want to share about my community is that an elderly couple contacted their daughter on the Sunshine Coast through Facebook to say that a tree had gone through their roof. Out of the darkness two young men came with chainsaws—the very kind of young men whom we apparently demonise sometimes in this place—and chopped and lifted that tree out of the roof and put tarps in place so the couple knew that on Christmas eve they had some sign of security. That is the type of community that I represent, but it was not over. It is upsetting that the very structure of your home, your garden, your street and your neighbourhood—things that we can usually take as concrete certainties—can be turned upside down. However, the force of nature was no match for the Jimboomba and Tamborine communities. They rallied together to look after each other.

I want to acknowledge the member for Scenic Rim, whose electorate had even more devastation. We shared some constituents who suffered from that. I was very pleased to look after the Cedar Grove people as well, but I know that he was very busy through that period. I particularly want to acknowledge all of those volunteers at the Jimboomba community hall who were ably led by the tireless Sarah Weir and who swung into action immediately. There was a kitchen, there was coffee dropped in, there was phone charging and we got hot showers going. After a few weeks I know that that whole community was exhausted. This happened at a time that I had set aside in a tough year to renew and recharge, and it was—not in the way of putting your feet up on the beach but renewed in that spirit that I could be extremely proud of the Jimboomba community that I represent and the Queensland spirit. I am so proud of those who stepped forward to help those in need. I am humbled to be their representative in this 58th Parliament of Queensland, and I make my pledge to work hard for them, to stand up for them and for a better Queensland.

We should never take for granted in this state that this place has been dissolved 58 times before an election and then reconstituted peacefully after an election. For the fourth time the people of the electorate of Logan have entrusted me with the responsibility to serve them and to be their representative in this place. Fifty-eight times those who have their names in that hallway outside have put their case to the people of Queensland, and we join them as part of the parliament in this tradition. We should never take for granted that we can do this peacefully whilst accepting the results, taking stock and coming back together again—accepting with grace and humility the results, especially when they do not go our way. This is the most important thing that we can do in this place. I certainly feel that we Australian Labor Party members in this parliament were sent the message from our communities

that they felt we could do better, and we hear that message. We also recognise those who have lost contests. They were passionate, hardworking representatives for their electorates. Most of all, I counted them as friends and I have continued to listen to them as they are now humble community members continuing in their different roles to serve their communities.

I know that so often in our society those who are elected to this place and our federal parliament are attacked in the media and on social media. I would not have thought that it was quite as difficult as the early Christians, who of course were physically attacked and hung upside down on crosses et cetera, but nonetheless I take the analogy of St Paul's letter to the Romans. I do know that it is hard sometimes to put yourself forward to participate in democratic contests. I know how hard it is to lose this contest. I have done that myself. I hope that our communities continue to give them support as ordinary community members who tried to do their best for their communities.

I recognise that, clearly, through their votes, the people of Queensland wanted to see some sort of change. I understand that since coming out of COVID we needed to better anticipate and act quicker to build more new housing and to push councils, especially Brisbane, to help with that process. I recognise that the councils in Logan understand the need for young families to move into affordable housing and I want to work with them to continue to do that. We needed to act earlier on the costs of living that Logan residents faced. I have recognised that we needed to do more to ensure that people felt safe in their homes. We did not get it all right, but no government does. I firmly believe in the democratic process and listening to voters—not just those who voted for us but also those who always vote against me, and especially those who voted for us before but this time wanted to give the other side a go.

I want to thank the candidates who ran against me, especially Matt, who promised to keep pushing me on the issues that matter to him. I deeply respect all those who nominated or volunteered for every party. To stand on something is valuable. I want to thank some of the members who ran against me in the past who have become friends and in some cases helped me in my election campaign. Being able to be respectful and listen to their ideas has actually paid dividends that I would not have expected. Some of those who handed out against me, including some who have done it for years, I have come to count as friends—maybe they do not, but I do. They have challenged me on points and made me think. Even if I do not agree with them, I respect their idealism to stand up for what they genuinely believe. I will not mention names so as to not ruin their reputation within the LNP, but they know who they are.

I also want to thank a particular group of volunteers who helped out in my campaign—that is, my three little volunteers, Jack, Caitlin and Lucy. None of them are that little anymore, but I still think of them as little, even though Jack is now several inches taller than me. I want to thank so many volunteers, because we in the Australian Labor Party know that we can only do it with the support of thousands of people and the union movement. I want to especially thank Lana and Dani. It has been an exhausting year, starting off with a huge storm and ending with the election. They were rocks upon which we were not always easy because it was a tough and stressful time, but I want to thank them. I especially want to reach out to Dani, who I know was having an operation today. I hope it all went well and you are recovering well. As always I want to thank John Mickel. John was a former Speaker.

Mr Stevens: Hear, hear!

Mr POWER: I notice the member for Mermaid Beach recognises John Mickel. He is an incredible person whose integrity and values and his desire to be the very best in representing a place shine through. I also want to thank Teresa Lane, who, again, is a long-term friend. Her work as a councillor, where she is deeply embedded in her community and deeply connected to the grassroots of that community, means that she is very valuable in relation to the principles of being a member but also just keeping me sensible and level-headed. While I am talking of council, I want to thank the other councillors—Jon, Sledge, Scotty, Tim and Natalie—who each in their own way have pushed me to be a better member, sometimes by saying that I am not doing well enough and at other times by giving me good ideas and connecting me with community. I always appreciate when they ring up to say, 'I think this is more of a state issue. Do you want to call them?,' because it keeps me grounded and connected to my community. Scotty ran against me. He is one of those people who, even though you run against him in a contest, you get to think of as a good friend.

I want to thank Crystal, David E, Lisa B, Hayden, Kilian, Terry Mac, Jen and Michael Eborn, who are away in New Zealand on a very special remembrance trip; Stuart, who is a teacher; Auntie Leonie and her granddaughter Shantay; Pat and Sarah, who I mentioned before; and Kate, Ryan and Michael George. I want to thank Girmay, Joan and Terry, who I see so much of and are so valuable to me; Terry Carter, Sue, Neil Borman, Adrienne Cremin, an old friend, Dot and Art, Carolyn Siemon, Sayed from a community group. I also want to thank someone who perhaps did not have the energy or the fitness to help, but helped renew me last year and this year as a member of parliament. Her name is Margaret

Crowther. I first heard about her when her daughter rang because she had had an \$8,000 bill from the Logan council for her water. She had been away in hospital, and the ground had shifted and a pipe had broken and the water had spewed out into a creek on the edge of her block. Even people coming to check on the house had not noticed that water was going into the creek.

This \$8,000 for a pensioner was absolutely devastating. I took the issue to the former water minister, the member for Gladstone, and I explained the situation to him. I also explained that Margaret Crowther was somebody real and I said that we needed to change this law. We put in place high water charges because we wanted people to value water use and be careful with it, but that was not the objective if they did not know about it. I want to thank the member for Gladstone because he worked with the department to say this is a fairness and equity issue, that the marginal bulk cost of water is very low so we can do the fair thing and get that money back. I managed in a small way to change the law. We legislated it here. For me it was the Margaret Crowther law. Although this might be a small thing, I think that it is something that has helped one person in each of our electorates—maybe it is a South-East Queensland thing, to be honest. It might be a person like Margaret of very limited income who really needed that help. You can make a difference when you have ministers who deeply care when you bring them a story about a real person.

My wife, Jacki, of course did not volunteer for me, but I value her enormously. As we transition into the stage of life where our children have become young adults—which seems shocking enough—and our parents age, we face new challenges. I think that it is incredible that I am doing it with her.

I want to thank the Australian union movement. Too often in this place we see their integrity traduced. We see attacks on the people who go out to a site after a worker has been killed, who then go with their workmates to a house to explain to a grieving partner what happened and how they want to care for them, get fair compensation, but also want to see that it never happens again. They work not just for safety but for decent pay. If we are in a society where people do not get decent pay and conditions for hard work and all of those winnings accrue in our society for those who own companies and shares—those who already have get even more—then we are doing something wrong.

I have been a member of the Australian Workers' Union for many years. They are a union that is particularly close to my heart. I want to thank Stacey Schinnerl in particular, but all the workers of the Australian Workers' Union. I also want to thank all the other unions, the T-dubs, the plumbers, the teachers, all who have done such an amazing job for the people of Queensland. Recently I was at the coalminers' dinner and they were giving an award to a delegate. The vice president said of the delegate that he is the best type of delegate because he knows how to do everything on the mine site. He knows how to run every piece of equipment, he knows how to fix every piece of equipment so the bosses could not get rid of him if they tried. I thought that was a great work ethic for the United Mineworkers Union as they are now called. They value the work, they value doing the hard work, but also want to ensure it is fair and safe.

We deeply respect and understand the will of Queenslanders. Sometimes when a government loses all that they did gets overlooked. I want to respectfully point out the many positive things we achieved for Queensland in the last parliament. When we were at estimates the former premier Steven Miles reminded me that we had spoken together as teenagers about getting fairer fares for those in outer suburbia. We got to deliver that for every young person in outer northern suburbia and in Logan who was struggling to afford that transport.

We built two new bus lines and there are three more to come, supported demand-responsive transport and introduced the Tools for Tradies initiative. We recognised that the cost of living was hurting people so we did some extraordinary things such as introducing 20 per cent off car and ute registration, \$1,000 energy rebates to help people who are struggling and free TAFE. Perhaps those things will be forgotten.

Mr Healy: Sporting vouchers.

Mr POWER: The former sports minister mentions the sporting vouchers and there are other things such as free kindy. We recognised that when your kids go into kindy it can be one of the most expensive times in your life—especially in Logan, where so many families have also bought houses, which can be a double whammy. We helped the AFL Giants and many other sporting groups. In this term I want to help the Pirates.

I recognise how much we did for schools. It is great to see former minister Grace in the House, because she was committed to building the new schools we needed in outer suburbia. That was about more than just building old-style schools. I will not mention any names, but perhaps for some people outer suburbia was a second-rate place where the LNP delivered second-rate schools. We delivered

the best schools in Queensland. I recognise that we air-conditioned schools in South-East Queensland. It is an extraordinary thing that the department managed to air-condition every school in Queensland. I know we have talked about that.

I want to reflect on the Mount Lindesay Highway, which I spoke about last night. All members recognise that no LNP minister has ever initiated and delivered a project on the Mount Lindesay Highway. In fact, history shows that the LNP has only cut projects. Halfway through the project, they cut funding for the Green Road through to Stoney Camp Road upgrade. We are building that project right now and I hope that the LNP does not cut it. If they try to, it will not be like last time, when LNP members were silent, because I will fight tooth and nail to stop them from cutting that project like they did last time. If we get through that—and I know it will be a struggle—let's build the Green Road overpass and the four lanes from Chambers Flat Road through to Green Road. Those projects deserve backing to support a growing community.

Government members interjected.

Mr POWER: Minister, I can see there is a lot of excitement for the Mount Lindesay Highway so you had better deliver.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Member for Logan, you have the call. It would help if you were not being provocative.

Mr POWER: I am also excited by the new challenge that the opposition leader has presented me with, which is to be a fighter for mineworkers and the resources industries of Queensland. I know that they do a fantastic job in both hard rock, where my family comes from, and in coal, where my wife's family comes from. In that way ours is a mixed marriage. I am deeply passionate about resources—the people who work in the resources industries, getting a fair return for Queensland, keeping workers safe and attracting new investment. Investors are excited about the mining industry in Queensland and I am excited by this challenge. I look forward to getting some productive things done and having great policy that strengthens Queensland after the next election.