




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2025

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (3.43 pm): It truly is an honour to continue serving the good people of Aspley for a third term, and I acknowledge the traditional owners of the area that I represent. I congratulate the Premier and his team, all elected members and Mr Speaker on his appointment.

Whilst I am immensely privileged to be standing here today being elected for a third term to represent our part of the north side, of course the former government was not successful across the state in winning a fourth term. I acknowledge the outcome of the election and I respect Queenslanders' choice. As I now stand as a member of the opposition, I can say that my Labor colleagues and I are listening and understanding that we can do better. We reflect on how we can better engage with Queenslanders across the state. Nevertheless, we will hold the government accountable for its promises to the state. Queenslanders have been promised the world and Queenslanders deserve an opposition that will fight for the promises made to them. My job is to fight every day to do what matters for Queenslanders.

Locally, I am so pleased at what we have achieved over the last seven years in Aspley: multiple school upgrades; transport investments like the Beams Road overpass and starting the Gympie Road bypass tunnel work; extra beds and a new car park for the Prince Charles Hospital; great wins for local sporting clubs; as well as kicking off the Carseldine Urban Village, providing housing supply and affordable housing for our area.

At a ministerial level it has been the honour of my professional life to have been the transport minister for 10 months. Being able to implement 50-cent fares for the now opposition leader—positively disrupting the public transport model in Queensland forever—is something that I could only dream of as a lover of transport and particularly public transport policy growing up. Securing state and federal funding to build the rail line to the Sunshine Coast is something I am also proud to have done over this period which will hopefully stand the test of time. In the veterans space, as a former assistant minister from 2020 to 2023 I am proud that we were able to increase funding for veterans groups and establish Queensland's first ever Veterans' Council.

Last term Aspley continued to see the investment and infrastructure it deserves. I would be standing here for hours if I listed all of the projects I saw delivered or all of the funding I helped commit, so I promise to keep it short. Gympie Road runs through the middle of the electorate, linking all the local suburbs in Aspley together. With the increased level of local and industrial through traffic moving throughout the north side and beyond, I am proud that we got the ball rolling with the Gympie Road bypass tunnel and associated public transport surface works. The feedback I have received from locals has been overwhelmingly supportive. This game-changing project will bypass 19 sets of traffic lights and save commuters over 30 minutes in travel time per day. This makes people get home to their families sooner and gives Gympie Road back to north side locals. In the last budget we committed over \$300 million to support the continued pre-construction works. The government committed to it pre-election, but we have not heard anything from it since. I look forward to seeing what the government is going to do with this project, which it committed to before the election.

Moving on to another critical road project, I am very pleased that we have started early works on the Linkfield Road overpass duplication. Planning is well underway to duplicate the lanes, increase the height and lengthen the entry and exit ramps of this overpass. Unfortunately work looks to have stopped on the project since the election, so I will be looking to hold the government to account to make sure this project does still go ahead. Now that we have the federal members who can help make it happen, I am looking to see some progress on this.

It is positive that the Beams Road overpass is truly taking shape. If you drive down Beams Road now you will see that it is very much coming to life. The already open and upgraded park-and-ride facility at Carseldine station complements the overpass by providing additional car parking spaces for locals and diverging entry and exit traffic off of Beams Road. This project is in addition to other developments in the Carseldine area such as the planned 152 social and affordable homes at Carseldine Village, providing much needed housing relief on the north side. The community has been calling out for these projects for decades and I am so happy to have been the one to get them off the ground and moving. I promise Aspley this: I will continue to support these projects and ensure that I will hold the government to account to keep the funding that I have previously secured.

Regarding our fantastic local schools, I will always continue to support and fight for the next generation of Queenslanders. Aspley is lucky to have more than a dozen schools between primary and secondary as well as special education schools that give extra support to local families who need it most. I will always be proud to have been part of a team that delivered air conditioning to every classroom in the state, because our children should be as comfortable as possible and ready to learn.

Locally down on Hamilton Road, Craigslea State High continues to be a powerhouse in volleyball, ranked consistently the first, second or third in the nation. That is why I fought for and delivered Craigslea's Volleyball Centre of Excellence. I am thrilled that this project makes Craigslea State High the first school in Australia to have fully equipped indoor and outdoor facilities. This school's fantastic talent deserves fantastic facilities. This project will have flow-on effects to the wider community, as the centre will also host an array of other local sporting groups and events. I would like to also mention how disappointed I am that the LNP has not come to the table in committing to our \$26 million investment to secure for Craigslea State High much needed upgrades. These include drama, language and music facilities. I believe these upgrades are necessary and I will continue to champion the school.

To the south-eastern side of the electorate, last year I committed half a million dollars for Geebung State School to make school traffic easier and safer. These upgrades are around improved stop, drop and go facilities, upgraded roads within the school and additional car parking spaces. It is great to see that it is almost complete—it might even be open this week—and I am keen to check it out after this sitting.

Down the road, I was proud to deliver a state-of-the-art learning centre at Geebung Special School. This brand new, two-storey facility provides 12 additional learning spaces, is equipped with staffrooms and amenities and has tailored disability parking spaces.

In the middle of the electorate, at Maundrell Terrace and Horn Road, we were able to lock in over \$600,000 to Aspley State School to deliver increased capacity at the school drop-off zone on Horn Road. This has been a long time coming, and it is great to see that the council finally came to the table and we got it done. It was great to be there on federal election day to see the car park open and running. I think it needs some minor improvements, but it is a really good local project for a school that has had bad traffic for many years.

Regarding health, the Prince Charles Hospital serves much of Brisbane's north side and is extremely important for locals to receive the health services they need. Last term we secured funding to deliver upgrades such as a new paediatric emergency department, 53 extra treatment spaces and 93 new beds. I am proud to say that once these upgrades are completed the Prince Charles Hospital will be the second largest children's health service in the state. It is disappointing to see the government delay these projects, though, in their recent health projects reconfiguration. We will be fighting to protect these critical projects on a reasonable timeframe so that locals can continue to use these fantastic facilities. It is great to see the multistorey car park, which will provide almost 1,500 car park spaces, coming to life. I am keen to ensure that the government makes sure these car parks are affordable for both patients and staff into the future.

In terms of local clubs, Aspley would not be the same without its many fantastic local sports and community clubs. They build a sense of community, foster local talent and house important spaces that many local groups use. I would like to acknowledge all staff and volunteers who dedicate themselves to making our community on the north side a better place. I will always continue to support them wherever I can. Aspley Devils, the home of Rugby League talent in Aspley, has seen strong

membership growth year after year. That is why I was thrilled to help secure over \$350,000 last term to go towards constructing new change rooms, which are now open. I was also able to secure over \$200,000 for Aspley Memorial Bowls Club to futureproof this great local asset. The area also holds fantastic Aussie Rules talent at Aspley Hornets. With their membership exploding, particularly amongst women and girls, it was great to see \$1.8 million from the government. It does not quite match our \$2 million proposal, but it is great to see that commitment anyway. I am keen to see that delivered in a timely manner.

I also want to highlight some local charities that do incredible work in our local community, in particular Broken to Brilliant, based in the beautiful suburb of Geebung. Established by domestic violence survivors, Broken to Brilliant serves as a post-crisis charity to mentor other survivors to re-establish successful lives. It is vital that we support this local charity group, and I am keen to help it wherever I can.

Stepping Stone North has been a really great new addition to the local community down there at 7th Brigade Park in Geebung. Jacqui and her team do amazing and incredible work. It is a much needed addition to our community. Zillmere Community Centre, just across the road in the Nudgee electorate, serves our community as well, as does Boss Boxing. They do fantastic work engaging young people in the area.

Speaking of clubs, it is disappointing that the now government has not yet come to the table in supporting the expansion of Northside Indoor Sports Centre in Zillmere, the home of the Northside Wizards, of course. Indoor space is so needed across Brisbane, particularly across the north side. I hope the government sees the benefit here. There is the space there to do it. There is need and demand. This is something that really should be happening sooner rather than later.

In terms of local parks, improving accessibility across the electorate is also very important. I was pleased to secure funding last year to build a footpath connecting Zillmere and Beams roads to complement the existing Cabbage Tree Creek bridge, which I opened in 2020. We delivered this footbridge to stop locals from having to traverse drainage pipes to get to Aspley State High School from Carseldine station. We have the funding to make it even better, but Brisbane City Council were not willing to fund the local footpath themselves. I know that they can be very slow at times, even when another level of government is footing the bill, but this project is essential to connect Zillmere and Carseldine and help more locals to use their 50-cent train ride at Carseldine station.

I would like to congratulate all newly elected and re-elected members of this House. Of the new members, I particularly acknowledge the members for Ipswich West and South Brisbane and my fantastic new neighbour the member for Sandgate. I look forward to great contributions from them all. I will miss members who were here last term but who are no longer in the House, either through retirement or electorally decided. I hope to see many of them either back in here or succeeding in whatever future endeavours they choose. As everyone in here knows, this is a tough job, a largely selfless job and a very public job, so I will always have respect for anyone who serves in this place.

I also want to thank the special people who help me to be able to stand in this House today. I sincerely thank my electorate office staff, who have worked long hours to support me in my role as a local member and, most importantly, support the community. Janet, my electorate officer, who came to me a bit over a year ago, does amazingly well keeping the show on the road. I can safely say that she has done a tremendous job holding the office together. Eric, Bryce, Steph, Wonjun, Jack and Shamus all gave it their all and have really big futures ahead of them. Also throughout the term we had Lucy, Ken, Ivy, Rosemary and Chris.

In terms of the campaign, I thank Caleb, who came in and led our charge locally with style and skill. I also thank volunteers such as Graeme, Murray, Ash, George, Zander, Graham, Jake, Cooper, Tim, Melinda, Dearne and many others. In addition to their day jobs, every single one of my former ministerial staff helped my campaign. I will forever be in awe of their dedication locally and for the state. Being a full-time employed hack after an election loss can be challenging—I have been there myself—but they are all getting on with it and they are all going on to bigger and better things without having me to slow them down.

I thank my original sources of advice and sounding-boards in running for Aspley and who still help me to this day: the crew at We Like What They Are Doing, formerly the Cave of Forgotten Dreams—just a great bunch of hardworking battlers having a go and doing their best. I also thank Senator Anthony Chisholm, my local federal member Anika Wells and local councillor Jared Cassidy for their help with the campaign. Jared in particular helped direct my campaign. I also thank Wayne Swan for launching it.

I also thank Kate Flanders, Zac Beers, Mitch and Bella from party office. I thank Josh Millroy and his crew from the TWU, Stacey Schinnerl from the AWU, Justin Power from the SDA and Gary O'Halloran from the plumbers union for their help on the campaign. Other unions, including the QNMU and Together union, strongly stood up for their members in Aspley.

To my family: I thank my wife for bearing so much more of the family load, particularly in 2024. I acknowledge my parents; Viv's parents; and our boys, Oscar and Milo, who make me happy and proud every day.

I thank the good people of the Aspley electorate. I will never take your support for granted and I will continue to work hard every day for our part of the north side, to fight for results we can achieve locally and across the state. I will fight every day to do what matters for Queensland. Since its inception in 1960, Aspley has had only one Labor MP other than myself, the fantastic and amazing Bonny Barry, who told me I had to win it for a third time to match her record. I am pleased to have done so and glad our hard work ensured we achieved a solid result in Aspley to buck the overall trend and be the first time our party has held the seat in opposition.

I thank the members for Logan, Miller and Gaven for coming up to the deep dark north to help scrutineering in the post-election period. I thank the one current and former state secretary who helped with scrutineering—as well as Anika, Mitch, Bella, Luke and others—during that week and a half.

Whilst former colleagues of mine I will miss in this place, I am glad that many current colleagues were returned along with me. A lot of people put their trust in me to keep fighting and keep working hard locally, so I am keen to continue that for another four years.