




Speech By
Hon. Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2025

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. BA MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (8.56 pm): I rise in this address-in-reply debate. I want to acknowledge the Governor's opening of parliament and her speech. It is the first I have received on the government benches, and it was a privilege to be able to listen to a clearly enunciated plan to deliver a fresh start for Queensland. It has been my pleasure to get to know the Governor a bit since coming over to the government benches. Obviously, in opposition you have less to do with the Governor, but as a minister through the process of government you have more to do with the Governor. It has been a privilege to get to know the Governor. In fact I have a six-year-old daughter who now is 'best mates' with the Governor after going to the swearing in of the cabinet. I was at the ballet in December, which I do not do regularly, and the member for Surfers Paradise was there with the Governor. We were a few rows back, I think.

Mr O'Connor: You went to the ballet?

Mr MICKELBERG: I was at the ballet. I was not wearing a dress, but I was at the ballet. John-Paul was there with the Governor, and my six-year-old daughter kept waving to the Governor and saying, 'Hello, Governor. How are you?' I was shooshing her and saying, 'You can't do that here.' I want to acknowledge the good grace and the manner in which the Governor goes about her business. It has been an absolute privilege to get to know her.

I want to thank the people of Buderim for entrusting me to be their representative in this parliament for a third term. My wife and I chose to settle in Buderim when we moved back to the Sunshine Coast because of the sense of community and the way of life that exists in Buderim. Despite the fact that Buderim, as I understand it, is the largest suburb in Queensland, it has a sense of community that makes it feel like a small town. People still say g'day in the main street and we still have an amazing array of volunteer organisations. This was writ large on the weekend when we celebrated the 150th birthday of the Buderim Mountain State School, and I want to acknowledge the Minister for Education for his attendance at that celebration of our community. We had the P&C, the Lions and the Buderim Foundation all coming together for an event which drew out all aspects of our community. It was a celebration of what we cherish in Buderim.

I also want to highlight the Buderim War Memorial Community Association, which is the embodiment of the community spirit that I value in Buderim. It is a living memorial that was set up after World War II. Rather than build a cenotaph, our community decided to create a community organisation that fosters a sense of community, that drives volunteering, and it has become a stalwart of our community in the years since.

This being the first opportunity since one of our past presidents Neil 'Lofty' Eiby OAM passed away, I want to place on the record my thoughts with Pat and his family. Neil was a tremendous stalwart for our community in his capacity as the BWMCA past president, but he was also a man of incredible substance and character, having served in the Army between 1958 and 1984. Neil served as a rifleman in 3RAR. He served in 1RAR in Malaya as well, and he was also a section commander in Malaya. He

served in Vietnam with 3RAR. For any of those who may have served in the military, they would know of the Battle of Balmoral, and that is where Neil served in a ferocious battle where Australian soldiers acquitted themselves with honour. It talks to Neil's experience and character. After that, he served as the regimental sergeant major of RMC, of 6RAR, and when he left the Army he served in Legacy and as a school marshal at the St Laurence's College where both he and Pat continued to care for war veterans, war widows and support their community. Neil will be sorely missed by not only the Buderim community but also the veteran community. I want to place on the record my thanks for his smile, his good grace and the manner in which he supported our community over many years. Vale, Neil 'Lofty' Eiby OAM.

In relation to the address-in-reply, I want to congratulate the Speaker, my good friend, the member for Condamine. He was able to school me when I first came into this place, alongside the now member for Hinkler, the then member for Bundaberg, on committee and guided us as we made merry hell, with the member for Bancroft as the chair of the committee. He was the guiding voice for us, the reason and our educator when we first came into this parliament. As I said when he was elevated to the Speakership, he will do a tremendous job—just don't warn me too much. I want to also congratulate the Deputy Speaker and Panel of Temporary Speakers as well for the manner in which they go about managing the business of the House.

I want to congratulate the Premier—in fact, all members of the government, but in particular the Premier—because I have seen over all of the terms that I have been in this parliament the toll that being a leader of a political party takes on those who choose to serve in that way. I acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition as well in the same vein. The now Premier is my friend. He has been my mentor since I came into this parliament as well, and he is showing Queenslanders the character and capacity that he has in his new role as the Premier. It is my absolute honour and privilege to be able to serve with him, alongside the other members of the cabinet as part of the Crisafulli government.

At the election, Queenslanders voted for a change and for a fresh start. We have spoken at length about the many crises affecting Queenslanders, but I think ultimately why Queenslanders voted out the former government was because they failed to chart a vision, other than fear, for a better Queensland. When I look at my community, we talk about the housing crisis. In 2017 when I was elected, no-one lived in Palmview, a part of the Buderim electorate. Now over 5,000 voters—so about 10,000 people—live in that part of my electorate. Many of those residents are first home buyers. When I doorknock in Palmview, admittedly prior to the election—I have not doorknocked there since, but I will—I am frequently reminded of the pressure that those who have made the leap to buy their first home and take on debt are feeling as they make that leap. This government wants to support those people. We are mindful that that section of society has been disproportionately affected by the rising house prices, and we want to ensure that we do whatever we can do to, one, bring more stock onto the market and, two, ensure everyone has the opportunity to get into the market.

The youth crime crisis has been spoken about at length. Arguably, it was the most significant issue before the last state election. It is still a problem. I will not step away from the fact that it is still a problem. We have taken meaningful steps to address this issue, but we will need to take more meaningful steps to further tackle this issue. I want to acknowledge the recent, completely unacceptable incident where a five-month-old baby was injured when a fire extinguisher was discharged into the car she was a passenger in. It is utterly reprehensible. As a father of four young kids, I want to place on the record that I stand beside our community in their disgust in relation to this incident. I do, however, want to thank our police for apprehending those responsible for the incident. I want to acknowledge the calls of my community for a greater police presence in Sippy Downs and Palmview where this incident occurred. It is something that I will continue to fight for over this term of government.

Regrettably, the former Labor state government left us in a situation where we had a chronically understaffed Queensland Police Service and little scope to increase the manning of stations like Sippy Downs, but nonetheless, since we came to office in October, we have added 240 additional police officers across this state. It is only a small increase, but it is a turn for the better and I look forward to that trend continuing as we support our police officers with better equipment and with the laws that they need—and I know you understand this, Mr Deputy Speaker—so that they can do their job. It is my hope that as we both empower and equip our police, more stay in the job to keep our community safe. As we have more police in our Police Service, that will provide us with the scope to invest in additional resources in places like Sippy Downs and Palmview, which had missed out for far too long under the former Labor government.

When I think of the health crisis, I think of the victims of that health crisis—people like Graham. I brought Graham to the parliament. Graham had all his teeth removed and he was suicidal because he saw no way to remove himself from the pain he was feeling. We brought him to this parliament and he got a phone call within 10 minutes of question time. That helped Graham, but what about the other

270-odd people on the Sunshine Coast who are in the exact same situation as Graham? I think of Stephanie and Darrell Massie, both of whom suffered for far too long as a consequence of the ambulance ramping, but also of the chronic elective surgery waitlist delays. Darrell in particular spoke about the impact that it had had on his life, and that flowed through onto the life of Stephanie, his wife, being his carer. It impacted her health. Wendy is a Sippy Downs resident. She was a category 1 rheumatology patient who could not get in to see a specialist and was suffering in pain constantly. We were able to help them—Graham, Stephanie, Darrell and Wendy—by advocating their individual circumstances, but every time I did I thought about all of the others who were in the same boat who had not come to their member of parliament.

What we need to do as a government, and what we are doing as a government, is fix the system to ensure there are fewer Grahams, fewer Stephanies, fewer Darrells and fewer Wendys. It will not be done overnight, but my commitment to my community is to work with the Minister for Health and the entire government to deliver that change.

When we talk about those people whom we seek to help as members of parliament, it is often our electorate office staff who are the face of that interaction in the first instance. I want to place on record my thanks to my current electorate staff—Danielle, Lisa, Olivia, Gina and Mia—but also Sophie who served as my electorate officer in the last term until she took a role in my ministerial office. They frequently, particularly when we are in ministerial roles, bear the load of ensuring that our electorates are serviced to the fullest extent. I want to place on the record my thanks for their efforts.

With regard to my ministerial staff, it has been an absolute pleasure since being entrusted by the Premier to be the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to be surrounded by professional, capable, competent and diligent ministerial staff, led by Tony Meredith, my chief of staff. They are consummate professionals. They are all smarter than me and they all make me look better than I am, and I appreciate their work and diligence in what is a complex portfolio.

I particularly want to give a shout-out to Sophie, who is currently at home on maternity leave waiting to give birth, I think on Friday. We look forward to Sophie coming back when she has finished having a bit of time raising the next little addition to her family. It was great to be able to catch up with Sophie last week.

I want to thank my campaign volunteers. I am not going to go through a list of all of them, but I want to call out a couple in particular. The first among those is Eric. Eric was my branch chair and my campaign manager. Eric is in his mid-80s and frankly should be enjoying retirement but is committed to the values that the LNP represents.

Both for myself and Ted O'Brien, Eric has been the stalwart of all of our campaigns. For the last four years he has been my branch chair. He was instrumental in ensuring we manned the booths, that we got the signage out there. I want to place on record my thanks to Eric. Now that he has stepped down as branch chair I want to say: enjoy retirement. Eric, it has been my absolute pleasure to work with you and I look forward to staying in touch as you enjoy retirement without working for the LNP.

I place on record my thanks for John, for Ted, for Olivia, for my father, Graeme, for Mitchell, for Angie and for my Army mates Lee and Craig—all of whom contributed disproportionately throughout the election period. I also want to place on record my thanks to my wife, Anna, who frankly spent more time on pre-poll than I did, as I was travelling the state trying to get new members of parliament elected to this side of politics. Managing four young kids and standing on pre-poll is easier said than done, but she did it and I am immensely grateful for her contribution.

I want to acknowledge the newly elected members of parliament. I do not want to single out every one, but I am going to single out two because I spent an awful lot of time trying to get them elected: the member for Keppel and the member for Rockhampton. It has been an absolute pleasure to see how all of the new members of parliament—on both sides, I might add—have conducted themselves since coming into this place. Admittedly, one took a little bit longer than election night but I could not have been happier after I saw the effort that those two members put in. The same is true of all new members in this place. The effort that was put in and the trust their communities placed in them to bring a fresh start is reflective of, one, their capacity and, two, their work ethic. I know they are delivering for their communities and it was a pleasure to be part of that process.

The Premier spoke this morning about restoring faith in government. The Governor spoke about how we serve the people of Queensland. I take that privilege with a considerable amount of weight. We will deliver what we said we would deliver. Ours will be a government of accountability. It will be focused on the issues that matter to Queensland. We made it very clear what we stand for. I do not agree with everything the Labor Party stand for. I do not agree with everything the member for Maiwar stands for. In fact, I suspect I agree with very little of what the member for Maiwar stands for. However, I respect their ability to come into this place and state what they stand for. We made it very clear what we stood

for and I think Queenslanders voted for a fresh start, Adult Crime, Adult Time and addressing those key crises. That is what Queensland wanted—clear direction and a competent and methodical government, and that is what we will deliver.

I want to thank the Premier for entrusting me with the Transport and Main Roads portfolio. I was not expecting it. I had not prepared for it. I probably wish I had paid a bit more attention to estimates last term in this portfolio but it was a great privilege—

Mr Minnikin: It was a lot of fun.

Mr MICKELBERG: I am sure it was a lot of fun. I had a bit of fun in mine but, now I wish I had paid more attention to yours, as well. My job is to ensure we get people home sooner at the end of a long work day. We need to build roads to support our growing population; we need public transport that is affordable, reliable, safe and frequent. I am incredibly proud to have made permanent the LNP's 50-cent fares—a tremendous LNP initiative. The Premier has championed that from the start and it is an absolute privilege to be able to make 50-cent fares permanent under the LNP and despite what the Leader of the Opposition might have suggested, given they spent more on advertising than they did on making it permanent. We have restored 80-20 funding for the Bruce Highway, a \$9 billion package. It is a fair record since the election, to be frank. I thought I would have to push for the whole term to get 80-20 funding restored, let alone \$9 billion out of the feds, but it is recognition of the fact that we want to work constructively to deliver for Queenslanders. We will work constructively with the federal government, despite the fact they are on the other side of politics.

We re-established the Bruce Highway Advisory Council. It was my absolute privilege last week to visit Bauple in the member for Gympie's electorate where we are starting work on 16 construction sites up and down the Bruce Highway. All of those projects will start construction this year and will continue to roll out the considerable amount of work that is required on the Bruce Highway, as we will on the 2032 games delivery plan. In my electorate we have committed to the Mooloolah River Interchange, and I will not talk about it in too much detail now because I will talk about it in the budget reply. That is a game changer for the Sunshine Coast community. The Mooloolah River Interchange has been spoken about long before I came into this place. I think we have committed to it at just about every election that I have stood at. I remember standing at a press conference with the now health minister when he was the then leader of the opposition committing to it.

An honourable member: On the roundabout.

Mr MICKELBERG: On the roundabout, indeed, yes. It is tremendous that we are now in a position to make it happen. We are making it happen. I have kept this until the end because it is the worst bit. All of us who come to this place know that it is their families who pay the price. I swore I was not going to cry. My wife, Anna: she is a rock. We have four young kids, two of whom have been born since I came to this place. My oldest is 10 and my youngest is four. That takes considerable weight. I want to thank Anna, I want to thank my kids. Last week I was at the Sunshine Coast show with my young fella Alex and we rocked into the TMR tent. Anyway the lady at the TMR said—

A government member: Show bags.

Mr MICKELBERG: Wave show bags, Cross River Rail show bags. Anyway the lady at the tent said to my young fella Alex, 'What is it like having dad as a minister?' and he said, 'Oh, I see him on Fridays and he sometimes visits on Mondays', and it hurt. That is the truth. They pay the price. They pay the price but hopefully it is worth it, because we will deliver a better Queensland for them and for every Queenslanders.