




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2025

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (8.03 pm): It is a pleasure to be speaking in this House, serving as the re-elected member for Callide in the 58th Parliament of Queensland. I extend my congratulations to my wonderful LNP colleagues and of course the Premier, the Hon. David Crisafulli, on their respective elections. It is fantastic to serve alongside such an enthusiastic, energetic and united team under a hardworking Premier. I also congratulate the member for Condamine on his appointment as Speaker of this House. I also want to acknowledge the four gentlemen who retired at the end of the last term having served in opposition with us in the LNP: the member for Gregory, the member for Burleigh, the member for Oodgeroo and, of course, the member for Ipswich West, who retired all too soon thanks to a medical condition.

A government member: It was good to see him last night.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection. It was fantastic to see him around the halls of parliament yesterday.

I say thank you to the people of Callide for providing me with the opportunity to serve them again. Every citizen I represent plays an important part in Queensland's economy. Collectively, we produce nearly one-quarter of Queensland's electricity and export millions of tonnes of coal and LNG as well as large volumes of cotton, hay, citrus, grain, beef, timber and much more. This is across an electorate larger than the state of Tasmania. I am honoured by the trust and belief they have placed in me and the great party I represent. I will always work hard to represent their collective interests and be their strong voice in Brisbane.

I want to thank the LNP membership, staff and the secretariat and the many, many volunteers who dedicated their time to help me get here. For the campaign I had nearly 150 volunteers with 28 election-day booths and four pre-polls. Once again, thanks to their hard work, we manned every single booth and in many instances were the only party to do so. To my Callide SEC, I say thank you for endorsing me again as their candidate. To my SEC executive and campaign team, who gave up weeks of their time, I say thank you for their efforts.

To my family—my mum and dad, siblings and their respective partners and many more—and many friends who played a big role once again, I say thank you for supporting me. To my wonderful team who keep my electorate offices operating, I say thank you for the hard work they all do. Melanie and Elise in Biloela have been with me for a while now and always greet constituents with a friendly face. Kat in my brand new Chinchilla satellite office happened to commence working for me on what ended up being day one of the official campaign. Talk about a baptism of fire! Given the size of the electorate, I regularly drive thousands of kilometres a week. In turn this means there are a few passionate locals and community groups that my team get to see more of than they do of me, and maybe my team might like this idea a little too much. Nonetheless, I say thank you to the three of them

for the hard work they do in keeping the office running while I travel across the state. Of course, there are a few casuals who support them and support me in the work I do. So thank you for the work they contribute.

Callide is a marvellous electorate. There is never a weekend without an event somewhere worth attending. As the local MP, I have the pleasure of being part of many of these celebrations and events. Last year we had centenaries for Theodore, Monto and Biloela. We had many agricultural shows—in fact, the most of any electorate in the state—and Anzac Day services. I think there were about 27 services on Anzac Day. Of course, there are also many schools throughout the electorate holding many awards and leadership ceremonies or schools that want a new Queensland flag.

A few highlights from the past year include attending the Australian polocrosse nationals, which were in my home town of Chinchilla, Beef Week in Rockhampton, the Mundubbera Blueberry Festival, the Eidsvold Dinner Under the Stars, the Jimbour Chef's Table and the Chinchilla One Long Table event. For me personally, I enjoy having the opportunity to meet with constituents across the great electorate of Callide to discuss issues that are important to them, to hear their stories and to listen to what they have to say and share. We have many remarkable people across this fantastic electorate.

The Callide community is a proud one and they have earned that right through blood, sweat, tears and hard work. Through the resources I have mentioned previously that we export, we contribute a couple of billion dollars in royalties each financial year plus the revenues from putting food on the table for Queenslanders. Some turn their back on these powerhouse industries. I do not. I am a geologist and a farm boy; I am not afraid to stand up for the primary industries that are the backbone of this state.

I was born and raised on my family's farm north of Brigalow on the Darling Downs. Growing up on the land taught me that if we wanted something, we had to work for it. I have carried this ethic with me throughout my life and do not put my hand up for a task and not give it my all. A job worth doing is a job done well. I count my blessings that I grew up in a household with a loving family. I had a full stomach, a warm bed and a roof over my head. Unfortunately, there are far too many children who do not have this opportunity, who are being neglected and who do not have the basics in life. We must do better. I commend our Minister for Child Safety, Amanda Camm, for announcing the commission of inquiry into the broken child safety system.

Not only has the previous Labor government failed society through its mismanagement of this system, but it has also failed the kids that it was meant to protect. This inquiry will let the sun shine in on a broken program. We were elected with a strong mandate to tackle the crime gripping Queensland. With the very unfortunate but strong links between crime and the child safety system, this inquiry will work hand in hand with the other work we are doing to tackle youth crime. We will not apologise for being tough on crime. I note some faraway body called the UN seems to have a problem with our approach, but I commend the Premier for standing up to it. We were elected by the people of Queensland to represent Queenslanders, not for the agenda of a foreign body.

Mr Krause: We make the laws in this place.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection: we do make the laws in this place and we are not ashamed to say that.

Some say commitments from politicians do not mean much, but they do for me. We have made commitments to many communities across Callide and we will deliver on them. The LNP is committed to providing easier access to health services. In Callide the Biloela Hospital upgrade, the Chinchilla Hospital replacement, the Moura Multipurpose Health Service aged-care extension and the Jandowae Multipurpose Health Service upgrade are projects that we will see through to completion. The federal LNP secured funding for Moura's aged-care extension project in April 2019. This was for the state to deliver at the time. However, thanks to Labor's chaos, crisis and sheer incompetence, this critical project had sat idle until we came to government. The Crisafulli government got straight to work and a tender has now been awarded for the project, with construction set to commence soon. This is a government that is getting on with delivering for Queensland.

The Biloela Hospital upgrade is necessary after a decade of neglect by the former Labor government which left the surgical theatre and birthing suite noncompliant. Those opposite kept blaming a lack of staff for the birthing bypass that, as of yesterday, surpassed 1,000 days. You can have all the staff in the world, but that would not have allowed for these services to come back online because of the noncompliant facilities. This unfortunately highlights Labor's inability to appropriately manage the health system, and who bears the consequences of these Labor failures? Women. Those opposite come in here and make many comments that suggest that they do care about women and yet they fail the women in the bush.

The LNP is committed to restoring safety where you live. We will be doing this in Callide by installing security cameras in Jandowae and Miles, alongside of course the many laws that we have and will continue to introduce into this House. These cameras will provide extra security for local businesses and the community and also assist local police, who I know are eager to see these cameras rolled out. I am committed to providing better services and infrastructure in Callide, including improving the Calliope State School pick-up and drop-off zone located on the Dawson Highway. Earlier this month I met on site with representatives from TMR, Calliope State School staff and a P&C representative to discuss the planning and the path forward for this project.

Initial contact has already been made with the Gin Gin sports groups and the Calliope Football Club to discuss project planning for the facility upgrades that we committed to assist them with as part of the Queensland government's investment in grassroots sport. We also committed to provide defibrillators for the Callide Dawson Pistol Club, the Jandowae community sports and recreation grounds and the Lindsay Williams Oval at Wandoan. I am pleased to say that the departmental engagement with these organisations is underway to deliver on these commitments. There is plenty more that I have not mentioned that we are committed to, but there are also plenty of priorities that I still have, and I note that these are things that I am going to continue to fight for. We have an incredibly tough fiscal situation that I know the Treasurer is working through and these will take time to deliver if I am so lucky to get that commitment from my colleagues.

Something that I have spoken about in this House before is the widening of the remaining 11-kilometre section of the Mundubbera-Durong Road, and this remains a top priority road project for me. This will allow road train access to the North Burnett and create freight hub opportunities and in turn decrease freight costs on fresh produce. A significant amount of fresh produce is grown in the Wide Bay-Burnett region; I think it is nearly a quarter of Australia's fresh produce. Other roads that need a lot of work and upgrades and have sections in a state of disrepair thanks to Labor's road maintenance backlogs include the Leichhardt Highway and the Chinchilla-Wondai Road. I know that those who reside along the Warrego Highway or use it regularly would know that there is a need for more turning lanes so you can safely get off and on the Warrego Highway, especially at Dawson Gate Road just east of Chinchilla. I will continue to advocate for more road maintenance funding to include the widening of roads to make them safer and to see more heavy vehicle passing lanes and general repairs to the frankly disappointing and backward road infrastructure we have in rural and regional Queensland. With regard to road trains, in one instance near Biggenden primary producers want to use B-doubles and bigger trucks to improve efficiency through roads in that region, but they cannot get B-double permits to drive on them because of how narrow and degraded those roads are.

CT scanners have become an essential tool in the health system and one day I would love to see these installed in health facilities across Callide, starting with Biloela and Chinchilla. We have an incredibly challenging fiscal position and I know that the health minister has a huge mess to clean up in the health system. Nonetheless, I am going to keep bugging him and asking for CT scanners to one day be installed across Callide.

There are plenty of opportunities for more water projects. One project that we are delivering that was a formal commitment is the Cooranga Weir project. I have already been talking with the water minister, her team and SunWater about the delivery of that project and I am looking forward to seeing that delivered.

As part of the new government I have had the privilege of being appointed the Assistant Minister for Regional Development, Resources and Critical Minerals. The resources sector is critical to Queensland and the regions are critical to Queensland. We are the most decentralised state, and we are better for it. I look forward to working with the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, Minister for Manufacturing and Minister for Regional and Rural Development, Dale Last, to help him deliver for Queensland and deliver on his ministerial charter. Here are a couple of priorities that are in his charter that I am looking forward to working with him on. One of them is to create an environment for growth in the resources sector that will continue to underpin Queensland's long-term prosperity; lay out an ambitious long-term agenda which will see new and expanded mining opportunities across the state; and improve turnaround times for approvals while maintaining strong planning and environmental conditions. The minister has established the Resources Cabinet Committee which will help achieve all of those things. This is a huge step forward for the resources sector that brings a lot of wealth into this state.

Having previously worked in the resources sector myself—it might be news to everyone in this House, but that was as a geologist—I have worked in New South Wales and Central Queensland as a geologist and before—

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr HEAD: Yes; I take that interjection. I did work in Canada, formally not as a geologist but in the oilfields in the resources sector in Canada.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection; thank you, Minister Mander. This has given me a unique insight into the challenges and opportunities that this position brings and I now look forward to using this experience to continue to improve the economic and safety outcomes of the sector. I note that mine safety is critical and I have spoken about this in the House many times before, as has the minister. It was fantastic to hear the recent announcement of a new Mining and Resources Coroner in Queensland and a review into Resources Safety & Health Queensland. This review is much needed and it is fantastic to see that coroner position appointed. I am looking forward to working with the minister and my colleagues more broadly.

Some may ask how I can represent such an agriculture-heavy electorate and also stand up for the mining sector. I ask these questions: do you turn on the lights when you sit down to eat at night? What materials do you use in your house? What do you cook with? What is your phone made of? The reality is we need both the mining sector and the agricultural sector for a prosperous society.

There are many things that happen in Queensland and across the country that I cannot help but see the irony in. A city dweller will mow their lawn every week and they are considered a good neighbour and a good citizen. Meanwhile, a farmer manages regrowth across his paddock and an activist calls him an environmental vandal. We criticise our sustainable forestry industry and make it nearly impossible for them to operate. We then import paper and building materials from countries who have no regard for the environment. Some blame housing investors for the housing crisis, but then also campaign against the timber industry that will help reduce building costs and in turn increase supply.

Mr Stevens: We sell our coal for others to burn it!

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection, we do sell our coal for others to burn it. We have people who advocate for socialist policies, but cannot name a time that socialism has ever worked. Activists campaign against wild-caught seafood and then campaign against salmon farms. How about they turn up and show their true colours and say they want us to start eating bugs.

At the end of the day, feelings do not build a nation. Sound economic policy that enables industry does. Refusing to talk facts and economics only puts you on a one-way train to the dark ages. I challenge members to name me a business that is successful and has not had to make tough decisions along the way. I challenge them to name me a good government that has not had to make tough decisions along the way. Something that I find a bit funny as well is that red tape actually helps big business through drowning out small and family business competitors. That is something that gets lost on a lot of people when they want more rules to strangle industries. There is always going to be bad apples, and we need appropriate rules, but we need to reflect on the fact that the current regulatory and legislative framework for businesses to operate in this state and in this country makes it incredibly difficult for them to prosper.

I want to take the last minute of this speech to acknowledge a great bloke—my pop—who passed away last week. Allan Ernest Head, 93 years of age, was a true champion. He was a bookmaker.

Mr Stevens: Yes!

Mr HEAD: Which the member for Mermaid Beach might be interested in. He was a maths whiz and would always be testing me on my maths and would always be up to giving a little cheek. Only last year, well into his nineties, when he had dementia, his maths brain was still as sharp as any other human I have ever met.

Mr McDonald: A true Australian gentleman!

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection. He was a true gentleman. He was a human calculator as well. He was a former teacher, a farmer, a businessman and a fantastic family man. In the time of the election campaign the one thing that he did want to make sure he got out of the way was to get to the pre-poll booth and vote in case he did not make it past the election. He even has a current racehorse named after him: Chinchilla Ahead. Rest in peace, pop, Allan Ernest Head.