




Speech By  
**Charis Mullen**

**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Ms MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (5.57 pm): It is with great pride that I stand in the chamber re-elected as the state member for Jordan for the third time. I would like to congratulate all of the members who have been returned and welcome the new members to the 58th Parliament.

When I walked out of this chamber on the last sitting day of the 57th Parliament, I reflected on what a privilege and a responsibility it is to serve in this parliament. Each and every day that we are here we are making decisions that have a profound effect on individuals, families, organisations and businesses—indeed a privilege and a responsibility.

We no longer live in an era where governments and citizens operate in separate spheres. Driven particularly by advancements in technology, the engagement between a government and its citizens has in many ways transcended barriers. Whilst the anonymity of social media certainly provides plenty of ‘feedback’, I continue to believe that direct human contact and dialogue has never been more important or valuable.

Whilst the thought of standing for two weeks at an early voting booth is certainly not everyone’s idea of a good time, I embrace it wholeheartedly. There are the generous and kind comments that warm your tired heart—and feet. There are the people who want to let you know that you helped them in some way, big or small, and sometimes they brought a tear to your eye. There are the voters who were not happy with the direction you took and who wanted to explain their reasoning for not supporting you this time—it was important to really listen to what they were saying. There are those who had yet to make up their mind and sought to engage you in a discussion on the issues that matter to them and what you would do or what policies you support. Those were my favourite moments.

These are the moments where you cannot hide behind a slogan or dismiss something as not being in a plan. These are the moments when you must stand true to who you are, to what you will do and in what you believe. There were many of those moments during this election campaign: the women—and some men—who approached me to confirm my position on women’s reproductive rights in Queensland or how I felt about voluntary assisted dying. It was easy for me to answer because, unlike some, my views and feelings on these important issues had not suddenly changed.

I spoke to many in my community about crime, particularly youth crime. I acknowledge that, whilst the root causes of crime are deeply complex and the initiatives we set in place were beginning to yield results, too many people continued to feel unsafe in their homes. This meant we were failing them. The new LNP government has made a lot of promises to the people of Queensland when it comes to reducing crime. They were not particularly detailed promises, but many Queenslanders have put their faith and vote in this new LNP government based on the singular issue of crime, and they will need to satisfy the community’s expectations and beliefs.

The opposition warned the government that rushing their crime laws before Christmas without full and proper consideration would have unintended consequences. We have seen that come to pass and we have seen some of the most heinous crimes since their laws were enacted. The LNP have also indicated they will deliver the significant infrastructure that our growing Queensland needs—from roads, to rail, to hospitals, to new dams, to pumped hydro, as well as Olympic infrastructure, whilst at the same time they will lower debt, reduce taxes and rule out asset sales or job cuts.

At a time of unprecedented construction activity in our country with ongoing labour shortages, the demand for a construction workforce has never been higher. Most serious economic analysts confirm that, on wage cost drivers, an underinvestment in the pipeline of key trades—that is, the number of people choosing construction related vocational training or apprenticeships—has contributed to wage cost escalation. This, of course, is something that our Labor government sought to address through initiatives such as free TAFE and with direct financial support for construction apprentices as well as rebuilding QBuild, which had been decimated under the former LNP government. We wait with bated breath to see how the new government will achieve their promised cost savings on major government infrastructure projects. Will this LNP government have the ambition and fortitude to progress our new hospitals and expansions, our public transport projects and our energy infrastructure, or will they continue to make excuses with all of their pausing and in fact take our state backwards?

My electorate of Jordan straddles two of the fastest growing regions in South-East Queensland: Ipswich and Logan. Keeping up with this significant population growth means that infrastructure was, and will always be, a priority for my constituents. When I ran in 2017, I did so because I could see some of the immediate and long-standing issues that needed to be fixed in our community. This included, but was not limited to: solving the parking issues at Springfield Central Station; getting a solution to the Centenary Highway-Logan Motorway interchange; getting public transport for the communities in Greenbank and Flagstone; and fixing the bus services in our Ipswich area. I am very proud to say that in the last four years we addressed those issues. We opened our magnificent \$44.5 million multistorey park-and-ride at Springfield Central Station, which is providing reliable parking for hundreds of commuters. We upgraded the Centenary Highway-Logan Motorway interchange, which has cleared a major congestion hotspot for my community. We delivered the first ever bus service for Greenbank and Flagstone and announced an expansion of that service, and we saw major improvements to our local Ipswich bus services with more services and expansions committed by our government.

These are a fraction of the many things that, with the support of our Labor government, we were able to achieve for our Jordan community. One of the most significant achievements for me will be the delivery of a new public hospital for Greater Springfield. This is something that I strongly championed and fought hard to secure. It will be an important legacy of what good Labor governments do. Working in partnership with Mater Health Services, construction is now well underway, and by early 2026 we will see 174 new public overnight and same-day beds, an intensive care unit, a much needed emergency department, the renowned Mater Mothers' maternity services and additional high level clinical services. Last September I was also thrilled to announce that our Labor government had approved a brand new 12-bed paediatric unit. With so many young families in Greater Springfield and surrounds, this is a welcome inclusion to the new hospital. It is a great relief to local parents to know that their children will receive quality health care closer to home.

I am now looking at future health services for the growing parts of my electorate, particularly around Greater Flagstone. During the 2024 state election I made an important commitment to progress the planning for a mixed-use health precinct in Flagstone. Whilst I have no doubt that Greater Flagstone will need a new hospital in the future, there is now an opportunity to provide early and much needed health services. My pledge of \$500,000 to progress a business case would have seen an investigation into the health service mix, which could provide for an ambulatory care/urgent care clinic as well as a range of allied health and community health services. The business case would also confirm a suitable site within the Flagstone Town Centre as well as the opportunity to co-locate other government agency services such as a police beat. This is something I will continue to pursue with the new government, as Greater Flagstone will see significant growth over the next few years. With more developments opening up in this part of Logan as part of the priority development area, there will be a need to secure more infrastructure and services to meet what will be a massive population surge.

The construction of roads will also be important for this part of our region. Our Labor government provided millions in funding through the Catalyst Infrastructure Fund for extensions to New Beith Road and Teviot Road as well as Mountain Ridge Road and Flinders Lakes Drive. My community is also crying out for an upgrade to the Springfield Greenbank Arterial, which is a local road under the responsibility of both Logan City Council and Ipswich City Council. I am keen to continue working with both councils on how we progress this important upgrade which connects two distinctive parts of the Jordan electorate: Greater Springfield and Greater Flagstone.

Another important project I have been championing has been upgrades to the Centenary Motorway. With the Logan Motorway interchange completed and the exit 32 upgrade to Springfield now completed, my mind has turned to the next important section: fixing exit 31 and a duplication through to exit 33. I know that our Labor government committed funding to progress the next stage of planning for the Centenary Motorway from Darra to Yamanto. Along with my parliamentary colleagues in Bundamba, Ipswich, Ipswich West and Mount Ommaney, we will be eagle-eyed to ensure that this work continues under the LNP and is not cut or diminished in any way.

We know that reducing congestion on our busy roads and highways is critical, which is why our 50-cent public transport fares are so important. Why should those who live further away from the city, usually because housing is more affordable, be effectively penalised by paying more for fares than those living in inner Brisbane? It was a question that many of our Labor outer metropolitan MPs raised with our then premier, and I wish to thank him for his leadership on this important policy initiative. As a fellow outer metropolitan member, he recognised the inequity that was built into our public transport fare system and he responded. My community strongly supported 50-cent fares. Whilst the LNP may now pretend they supported the idea all along—remember the member for Chatsworth saying ‘it’s a con’, or the member for Pumicestone saying it wasn’t in their plan, or even now shamelessly and embarrassingly trying to claim it as their own idea—Queenslanders are smart and recognise that this was, and always will be, a Labor initiative.

I would like to also thank the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader for their leadership, particularly through 2024. This was clearly reflected in some of the key policy initiatives released during this time, including Homes for Queenslanders, our Community Safety Plan and Putting Queensland Kids First. I am very proud to have served as a minister in the Miles government in the important areas of child safety, disability services, seniors and multicultural affairs. I am proud of the things I was able to achieve in 10 short months alongside my hardworking ministerial advisory team and our dedicated and professional public servants. This included: passing our Child Safe Organisations laws; removing blue card requirements for kinship carers; securing more funding for our early intervention programs; and progressing the rollout of delegated authority, which I know is making a tangible difference for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are over-represented in the child safety system.

I was pleased to deliver the Queensland government response to the disability royal commission and secure initial funding of \$160 million to progress the implementation of our response whilst also progressing national negotiations on NDIS reform and disability foundational supports for Queensland. We also finalised and introduced legislation on reforming restrictive practices in Queensland, and I hope the new government will continue to progress those important reforms. We delivered a new Queensland Seniors Strategy, a new Queensland carers strategy and the fourth Queensland Multicultural Action Plan.

I am deeply honoured to continue to serve as the shadow minister for multicultural affairs. As the daughter of migrants, I bring a very personal perspective to this role. I have a deep passion for ensuring we continue to celebrate, champion and provide ongoing support for our many incredible culturally and linguistically diverse communities across Queensland. I am also excited about taking on the role of shadow minister for public works. With a background in planning, development and infrastructure for over a decade before I entered parliament, it is good to be able to make a contribution in this critical portfolio for our state.

In Jordan, I am very proud of the campaign that we fought. Once again, it was a positive, engaged campaign that highlighted our considerable achievements and made a number of important commitments that focused on the needs and aspirations of our community. I would like to express my deepest thanks to our incredible group of volunteers on the Jordan campaign. Our result really reflects the work of so many over many years—Saturday morning street stalls and high visibility, making phone calls, doorknocking, letterboxing, putting up hundreds of signs, helping out at the early voting and election day booths.

We had, of course, the devoted members from our wonderful Labor family, and I am extremely grateful to our mighty Greater Springfield ALP branch. I wish to particularly acknowledge the executive members, Bec Andlemac, Michelle Alesana and Brenton Hill, as well as our all-important treasurer, Vince Atley, for their support. I want to also thank those from our community who were not members of the Labor Party but who wanted to support me personally or believed in what Labor was fighting for this election, particularly Tracy, Rhonwyn and Fabian, as well as members of our Springfield Malayalee Association. I will never forget that you stood with me when it counted.

There were four other candidates on the ballot in Jordan this time. Three did not show their faces at all during the election. Whilst having paper candidates is certainly easier on those who bother to show up for their communities, it is an indictment to see parties like One Nation treat the electorate with

such contempt and clearly only nominate candidates to get the public funding on offer. In fact, the One Nation candidate for Jordan did not even know what electorate he had nominated for—referencing the voters of Mount Ommaney on their One Nation page.

I want to once again thank my incredible electorate office team, Fran Bell and Rose Kildey. They have both been with me since 2018 and we really are a package deal in Jordan. They work extremely hard and continue to serve the community with grace, humour and a willingness to go above and beyond to help anyone who reaches out to our office, no matter how difficult the issues or the circumstances.

Thank you also to our Labor Party HQ team, Kate, Zac, Bella and Meredith. I am very grateful for your support as well as the support of my union, the Australian Workers' Union. Thank you, Stacey Schinnerl and team, for your continued support. Thank you also to Milton Dick MP, the federal member for Oxley, who continues to be one of my greatest supporters and closest friends, more than 30 years after we first met as youngsters at the UQ Labor Club. Thank you to Shayne Neumann MP for his support as well.

Finally, to my beautiful family—my husband, Sean, and daughters, Zoe and Mary. They sacrifice a lot for the opportunity that I have been gifted, but I know that without them none of this would have real meaning or purpose. It is truly the greatest privilege to be part of our family. I love you all so much. To my darling dad, Leon, my beautiful mother, Katherine, and my brothers and their families: I always say—and it bears repeating—that being part of a Greek family is truly a gift. You yell to be heard, you are always well fed and you never have any doubt about how much you are loved.

Moving to the opposition benches has certainly brought a different perspective, but I am certainly up for the challenge of keeping this LNP government to account and being open to the new opportunities that this role brings. What will not change is the great love for my community, and I will continue to serve with energy and enthusiasm and with the deepest gratitude for the amazing people of the Jordan electorate who have once again given me the opportunity and the honour to advocate for them and represent them in the 58th Parliament.