




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGEES

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (7.31 pm): It is a great privilege to rise in this House once again as the member for Nudgee. Securing the support of my community for a fourth term to represent them in this place is no less an honour than it was on the first day I walked in here in 2015. I am reminded as I stand here now, on an unfamiliar side of the chamber, of a reflection I have made previously—of the lesson I learned the first time I contested the seat of Nudgee in 2012, an election I lost. That lesson is one I always keep front of mind and it is: no-one owns these positions and no-one owns these seats—we are mere caretakers—and we must hold them lightly because our time in this place is limited. It is privileged but it is limited, and the Queensland community will always be the master of our time here.

With this reflection in mind, I congratulate all of the newly elected members across the political divide and welcome them to the House. It is a truly special place. I acknowledge the colleagues we have said goodbye to, who sought to continue to serve their communities but whose time here has come to an end. I wish to acknowledge their years of service to their electorates and their contributions to Queensland. I also acknowledge those who felt it was time to step aside and allow another to seek the privilege to serve their communities: Barry O'Rourke, Julieanne Gilbert, Curtis Pitt, Yvette D'Ath and Stirling Hinchliffe—all friends and all lucky to have served and chosen their time to leave. I say: goodbye and thank you for your service to your communities and our proud Labor values and tradition.

Second only to my own family are the electors of my beloved electorate, Nudgee. To them I say a sincere and heartfelt thank you for the trust they have instilled in me to continue to serve their interests in this place. With the exception of 14 years spent living in regional cities, I have lived and worked in the Nudgee electorate for most of my life. It is the place where I went to school and had my first job, where my husband, Ian, and I bought our first home and where my two beautiful boys are growing up and completing their schooling. It is a place that has given me much and to which I owe much.

Elections are always hard fought and won, but they also provide the opportunity to be on the ground each and every day, talking and listening to your community. The more than 90 hours spent at pre-poll was like a warm hug every day, catching up with locals—their families, their highs and lows, their concerns and their requests for the term ahead. Again I say: thank you, Nudgee—from Nundah, Northgate, Banyo, Nudgee and Nudgee Beach to Virginia, Boondall and parts of Wavell Heights, Geebung and Zillmere.

Of course none of us come to this place without the support and help of many others. Before thanking my team, I want to acknowledge my family. They are not here today because they are working, studying and playing sport, and they are doing all of those things, as they so often do, without me there cheering them on. I grew up in a Defence Force family so my father was often absent, but I always deeply respected his service and that of my mother as a volunteer in local community groups and outreach to those who were struggling most and the example it set to serve the community. My two young boys, JD and Ollie, are now also growing up with a similar experience and the inevitable sacrifices it brings. I thank them and my wonderful husband, Ian, for their support to run again. It is a decision the four of us make together each term, and I deeply respect what they give up in supporting me to be here.

I turn from my family to my team. First among these, I thank my dear friend and mentor of more than 25 years, my campaign manager extraordinaire and former member for Nudgee, Neil Roberts. Anyone who knows Neil knows he was a true gentleman of this place for his 17 years of service in the chamber. Those closest to me also know that, with the early death of my parents, he, along with Jenny, has been a constant source of support, encouragement and advice to Ian and me and there for all the momentous occasions over the past 24 years—the purchase of our first home, the birth of both of our boys, my election to this place and a generous stand-in for grandparents day throughout my boys' schooling so they were never the two kids alone. Neil tries to retire after each election so until 2028, Neil, you have earned your rest.

Around Neil was a tireless team of stalwarts of the labour movement, some of whom have been by my side since my first run 13 years ago. To my assistant campaign manager, Kes: in politics some things stay the same; others change continuously. Thank you for bringing a fresh approach to the campaign and for being my shadow for four weeks. Your future is bright and I am here to cheer you on, wherever your future may take you. To Reg and Emily: for your tireless coordination and organising the almost 300 volunteers who worked across the Nudgee campaign, thank you. To Jill: for the military operation that is a postal vote campaign, thank you. To Graham: the best high-visibility mobile and static sign site and pre-poll coordinator there is, thank you. To Scotty, Kim and Richard: thank you for the countless hours you spent at high-visibility sites, pre-poll and at strategy meetings, planning and lending advice.

To my electorate staff, Julie, Maddie, Tom and Jill: thank you for treating the constituents of Nudgee with the warmth and respect that they deserve, for your professionalism and for always keeping me connected to them when I cannot be at more places at once. To my other team, my ministerial team, who I will miss in the weeks, months and four years ahead: thank you for your service, for your friendship and for your dedication. You made every day better and easier for the intellect and humour you brought. I wish you all the very best as you forge a new path ahead.

I will always reflect fondly on what we delivered together. Chief among them as child safety and youth justice minister was to extend care in our child safety system to 21 so that no young Queenslanders in our care starts adulthood alone; or the expansion of intensive case management in our youth justice system, providing genuine evidence-based intervention—the kind which experts in the field identify as the most effective approach to tackling the highly complex factors that contribute to youth offending and reoffending.

As minister for the environment it was to phase out commercial gillnets in the Great Barrier Reef to protect threatened species; introduce enhanced protections for Lake Eyre Basin, the last free-flowing desert river system of its size in the world; expand protected areas and nomination of protected areas of Cape York for World Heritage listing; and legislate emission reduction targets to meaningfully address climate change. All of these reforms were for future generations of Queenslanders—for the air we breathe, the land our produce comes from and the water we drink. We also launched Queensland's first quantum strategy to ensure we are at the forefront of the quantum and deep tech revolution that has the capacity to solve some most of the most complex problems of our time.

I acknowledge the many outstanding public servants across my past portfolios of child safety, youth justice, multicultural affairs, environment, science and innovation who served the public interest so capably and professionally. Elections do not always afford the opportunity to say thank you or goodbye. I also acknowledge the former directors-general of both of those departments who made an extraordinary contribution but were so unceremoniously terminated by the new Crisafulli government. They gave much and they deserved much better.

The reforms I outlined earlier and the much needed cost-of-living measures we introduced at a time when people across our communities were struggling most, 50-cent fares chief among them, are just a few of the things that we delivered that mattered most to Queenslanders, certainly to people in my electorate. Just as I fought for them when in government, I will fight to protect them now in opposition. I thank my colleagues for entrusting the shadow portfolios of environment, science, innovation, climate change and youth to me, policy areas I am deeply passionate about.

I will always respect the will of the people that brought about a change of government. I congratulate the newly elected Premier Crisafulli, all newly appointed ministers and their wider government team. It is a special privilege to earn the trust of Queenslanders to lead our great state in government, but trust is also precious and must be treated as such. The responsibility of government is great as are the expectations. I say to all Queenslanders that we are listening to the message sent by Queenslanders and that we will keep listening. Our job is to fight every day to do what matters for Queensland and for all who call it home. I and my colleagues on this side of the chamber will be here to hold this government to the promises they have made to Queensland and to our communities, and it is to these promises I now turn.

The then opposition leader promised countless times to run an opposition that promised Queensland a different way, one of hope and positivity, a fresh start. It was a refrain he again promised during his election campaign. It was not true of the then opposition, it was not true of their election campaign and it is not true now of their early decisions in government. It is to the election campaign I now turn.

Every week of the campaign a new DL or letter in every letterbox attacking me personally was distributed in my electorate. I am sure many others received the same exact mail in their electorate with their face and their name. There are many in this House who have reflected on the campaign and how they felt we ran a campaign that lacked integrity and was negative, but there are no paragons of virtue on the opposite side of this chamber. Every single house in my electorate received mail every single week and then apparently Leanne Linard was singularly responsible for grocery prices and every other ill of the Queensland state. On polling day my face and name were supersized at every single polling booth—negative photos, negative slogans, negative claims. There was no policy, no plan and no vision, just slogans, negativity and baseless claims. That is what the LNP offered my community and my community were unmoved, totally unmoved.

While they were attacking me personally, I was in my community doing what I have always done: listening—listening to my community, being present, acting on their priorities and fighting to deliver the things that matter most to them, being genuinely positive and hopeful about our community, the future and what we can achieve with a real vision. In this election campaign I secured a number of commitments which were very important to my community which our Labor team said we would deliver. A commitment of \$6 million to build a dedicated music studio at Virginia State School was chief among them—a school delivering an incredible music program which rightly earned them the status of a music school of excellence.

Ms Grace interjected.

Ms LINARD: All air-conditioned, that is absolutely right. I take that interjection. Over 100 parents petitioned me to fight for an election commitment to deliver the project after, together, we successfully secured a detailed study on such a facility last term. I fought for that election commitment and I delivered on that promise. Our government committed to delivering the project if re-elected. The LNP did not match that commitment, so this will be an area of focus for me because that is what my community want of me.

I turn from music to Rugby League. During the campaign we committed \$3 million for the historic and mighty North Devils Rugby League Football Club, which has been serving our local community for almost 100 years, to re-energise their spectator facilities. The LNP did not match that commitment, but my community wants to see it delivered and I will fight for that priority to be delivered. From Rugby to football, we committed to deliver \$400,000 for the North Star Football Club in Zillmere for vital upgrades. The club is growing and so is their female participation. As a new generation of girls and young women have been inspired by our Matildas, the number of young women is growing. I commend North Star for wanting their local club to be a place where men and women feel equally welcome and safe to participate in an awesome game and one that I played myself throughout school. The LNP committed \$100,000 during the campaign, which was very welcome but it will not get the job done. They will need every dollar of that \$400,000 that we promised to deliver on that commitment. I also acknowledge that thanks to federal money we have seen delivered another commitment that we made, \$350,000 to the Virginia United Football Club that saw their gravel driveway finally lifted to the level they deserve. I am grateful that the federal government delivered that.

My community called for these commitments, so I called for these commitments and I will always fight for what matters most to them. I have always fought when in government and now I will do so in opposition to deliver the things they care about most, whether it has been upgrades to all my schools, extending parking at every one of the 12 train stations in my electorate, upgrading the Gateway Motorway North or making Sandgate Road safer—commitments Labor delivered when in government. I have always fought for my electorate and I always will. I do not forget where I come from and I do not forget who put me here and what I am fighting for. I believe that is why my community returned me as their member and I will not let them down because promises matter and trust is precious.

The new Premier also made a promise, to stop our Path to Treaty and truth-telling inquiry but to do so with decency and respect. I do not agree with the decision to stop the inquiry; I have made no secret of that. I believe deeply in the power of truth-telling to move our state forward. As the 13 faith leaders who came together and recently wrote to all 93 members of this House said—

Truth-telling and listening are at the heart of a healed, reconciled community.

...

an understanding of Queensland's shared story is essential for us to be a cohesive, respectful, and inclusive State.

If 13 faith leaders, many of different theological traditions and views, can come together with a unity of perspective and purpose on this issue, surely we all could have, too. Instead, in the first sitting week as their first order of business, the new LNP government scrapped the inquiry via a secret amendment, spirited away in an unrelated bill that was debated until midnight. There was no consultation with the inquiry chair, respected elders or even the knowledge of the media and, therefore, the Queensland public. History is not always comfortable but it should be known, and the faces of the roughly 60 young Indigenous leaders from across Queensland who were here for Youth Parliament as it happened will stay with me forever. Their grief was palpable and very difficult to reconcile with the Queensland I know and love and the hope I wish every young person holds for their future and our community. There was no decency or respect there.

The new Premier also vowed his cabinet would remain the same as the shadow cabinet and that his cabinet would reflect Queensland. It does not and I fail to see how only six women in cabinet truthfully reflects Queensland or how the way in which 10 directors-general were forced to sit at their desks and wait for confirmation of a job or a letter of termination and then marched out by security speaks of the respect the now Premier promised.

Mr Mander: Rubbish!

Ms LINARD: I take that interjection. It is not rubbish because those directors-general are the ones who told me how it happened, so don't you dare say it is rubbish. You are calling—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr O'Shea): Member for Nudgee, could you please address any comments through the chair and not debate across the chamber.

Ms LINARD: Promises matter and trust is precious and is already eroding. I and all members on the opposition bench promise the people of Nudgee and all Queenslanders that we will fight each and every day for them and to hold the government to the promises they made including: governing with humility, decency, vision and tenacity; keeping 50-cent fares permanently; no change to women's reproductive rights; no changes to coal royalty rates; no support for nuclear energy; no public sector job cuts, forced redundancies or asset sales; no change to voluntary assisted dying laws; managing the budget with lower taxes and lower debt but no cuts; reducing ambulance ramping to under 30 per cent; sacking any minister who does not meet their KPIs; and the Premier resigning if crime victim numbers are not lower. Promises matter and trust is precious and very easily eroded.

I want to conclude as I began, and that is to say what a great privilege it is to rise in this House as the member for Nudgee to serve a fourth term. Securing the support of my community for a fourth term to represent them in this place is no less an honour than it was on the first day I walked in here. I remain as energised today as I was on my first day to serve their interests, the interests of those who need us to speak up for them most and the interests of all Queenslanders in the term ahead, because it is truly a privilege.