




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (6.08 pm): I would like to start by respectfully acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we gather—the Turrbal and Yagara peoples—and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I also want to acknowledge the traditional owners of Waterford—the Yagara and Yugambeh language nation—and again acknowledge elders past, present and emerging.

I am humbled to be standing here once more representing the Waterford community, who have continued to put their trust in me to fight for their needs—something I consider to be one of the greatest honours of my life. I also want to take this opportunity to recognise the decision made by Queenslanders at the last election. I acknowledge and respect their choice and, in opposition now, Labor is listening to Queenslanders and working hard to hold the LNP government to account. I want to reassure Queenslanders we will continue to do that hard work over the next few years.

When it comes to our Waterford community, I am proud of what we have achieved together—achievements like the biggest ever expansion to Logan Hospital. When I speak with local residents, they always tell me how proud they are of our wonderful hospital and the hardworking health heroes who care for them. It is people like Dado, who gave birth to her twins, Jamie and James, who were then cared for in our new neonatal unit. She had nothing but praise for the world-class facilities and of course the dedicated and caring health workers.

Another local project close to my heart is the Salam Safe House, which is run by the Islamic Women's Association of Australia. I was able to help facilitate the opening of the safe house, which is the first refuge for culturally and linguistically diverse women in the country. The facility supports women across the Logan region who are experiencing family and domestic violence. I want to acknowledge Aunty Galila, who fought so hard to support and protect the women of our community. Without Aunty Galila this would not have been possible.

We have seen so many major road upgrades; the busway expansion; the opening of the new Loganlea fire station; the Logan Motorway upgrade; a new school hall for Loganlea State High School, which is about to commence very soon; and new multistorey classrooms and learning spaces at Marsden State High School and Mabel Park State High School. Our community in Logan is growing and expanding, and this vital infrastructure provides locals with access to the things they need that make a real difference to their quality of life. Thanks to the Logan Hospital expansion, there are now over 300 new beds, new treatment areas, state-of-the-art surgery facilities and four new floors for their emergency department building. This means that the people of Logan have access to even higher quality health care.

While I am immensely proud of the work we are able to do locally, these achievements extend well beyond the Waterford electorate. Our Labor government was able to deliver the biggest cost-of-living relief package in the nation. We oversaw the implementation of 50-cent fares, \$1,000

energy rebates, free kindy, free TAFE, FairPlay sports vouchers, extensive vaccine rollouts to protect Queenslanders and so much more. Every single one of these Labor initiatives is so critical because we recognise what matters to Queenslanders, and we will continue to fight.

I am especially proud of the work we have done to improve the lives of Queensland women and girls. We have criminalised coercive control, with laws commencing next Monday. We introduced affirmative consent. We invested \$1 billion in women and girls' health, and we saw real progress in closing the gender pay gap. One of the most significant, of course, was the legalisation of abortion in Queensland measures, because abortion is health care. Unfortunately, despite the importance of this issue, the Premier has silenced those of us who believe it should be a priority and does not want it even spoken about in this parliament. I say that women and girls in Queensland deserve better.

In my new role as the shadow minister for women, I will not let this advocacy falter. I am determined to continue to fight for the women of Queensland. This election and the many recent political events across the globe have highlighted how much work our society still has yet to do to continue to fight for the rights of women. I have committed to showing up every day for this cause.

While I could talk for longer about Labor's achievements, I would also like to highlight what we have already seen from the LNP government—and what a record it is! They have closed down pill-testing sites, backed by health experts and doctors. They have abolished the state's Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. They have banned gender-affirming health care for young Queenslanders. They have covered up an explosion at the Callide Power Station. The health minister has repeatedly refused to answer questions about women's health because it would be 'too burdensome'.

They have quietly torn up plans to provide Queensland children with vital relationship and health education and then backflipped as soon as the opposition brought this to light. They have cut funding to the Environmental Defenders Office. They have appointed LNP mates to every possible job vacancy including potentially sending Queensland back to the dark old days by appointing John Sosso to the Queensland Redistribution Commission. In the words of Brittany Higgins this week, they have sent Queensland lagging even further behind the Morrison government when it comes to protecting women from sexual harassment in the workplace by indefinitely pausing respect at work laws.

Now, of course, the LNP are preparing their first budget, and I have to say I am feeling very concerned for the people of Queensland. This is a government whose trademark is a trail of broken promises, rating outlook downgrades and cuts. The LNP Treasurer came into power with beefed-up numbers and no true fiscal plan. A government without a fiscal plan will always face consequences from credit ratings agencies—and that is exactly what we have seen.

Director of government ratings at S&P, Anthony Walker, took one look at the LNP government's MYFER and knew it was politics that was clouding the fiscal picture. He questioned whether the \$217 billion debt projection was real or just setting the stage for the new government to play hero. Ratings agencies went through Queensland's budget books right before the election and they put us on a stable outlook, which means they did not see any danger of a credit downgrade under Labor. So what has changed since then? A new LNP government. Because they have chosen to play politics—

Government members interjected.

Ms FENTIMAN: I am sorry. I know those opposite find this funny, but it is not me saying this; it is the credit ratings agencies. Queensland's borrowing costs are now higher because the Treasurer decided to play politics with the budget.

Mr Head interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for Callide, that is enough.

Ms FENTIMAN: It is Queensland families who are actually paying the price. The *Australian Financial Review* said that it is possible that there was 'exaggeration and inflation' when it came to the budget update. That is not the Labor opposition saying this; it is the *Fin Review*, thank you very much! There was a \$23 billion in a line item on page 7 for underfunded legacy projects in operational funding where the bulk of the operational funding is in the out years, and we still do not know what the \$23 billion is for. They cannot tell us. Maybe, once again, they have just decided to beef up the numbers to be the hero.

I spoke in my community about how important the Logan Hospital expansion is. I am afraid to say that we are already seeing early signs of cuts at other hospitals across Queensland. Work has come to a halt at the Redcliffe Hospital, bed numbers have been cut on the Gold Coast and communities left in limbo. That cannot happen in our community because our growing community deserves its upgrades and additional services. Families are counting on it.

The LNP lets us down at all levels of government time and time again. In fact, my opponent at the state election—the LNP local councillor, Jacob Heremaia—cannot even fix a local road upgrade. I cannot believe he decided to put his hand up and run for state parliament! The roads in our electorate that are marked as black spots are not prioritised by the local LNP councillor. I have vowed to the people of Waterford that I will continue to fight every day to hold this local LNP councillor to account. I will keep fighting to make sure Logan gets the investment it deserves.

While the next few years ahead will look different to anything I have experienced before, I will continue to uphold my values and fight for those residents in Waterford and in Queensland. I am doing it for people like Peter, who needed support with securing an extremely specific type of prosthetic leg. He came to see me, and I have to say I was delighted to be able to sit down and spend time with him and assist him and do everything I could in my power to make it happen because he, like every other Queenslanders, deserves excellent quality of life with the ability to engage with his community. I am doing it for people like Tammy, who runs a charity called Formally Ever After, which helps year 12 students struggling financially to attend their school formal. Tammy needed help after a fire destroyed a large majority of the donations that were given to the charity. My office was used as a drop-off point for countless donations from our community, and I was so happy to play a small role in getting change rooms built at the new premises for Formally Ever After.

That is just the kind of community we have in Logan. We look out for each other. We look out for our neighbours and, when times get tough, we band together to come back stronger than before, just like we did after the 2022 floods. In times of intense hardship, it is incredible to see the resilience and compassion of people in my community and how strangers help each other. These are the people I represent and I am so proud to do so.

It is fair to say that none of this would be possible without the relentless work of my incredible team of volunteers—the countless hours doorknocking in the heat, the late-night phone calls, the roadside stalls that left your arms feeling that they would fall off from all of the waving. That commitment to our great Labor Party, our values and our community, is something that I will forever be grateful for.

Thank you to my dedicated team of volunteers, led by Ben Driscoll as well as Courtney Padget, who helped manage everyone and kept the wheels of operation in motion. I give a special shout-out to Lonnie Neilson with his wife, Ruth, who supported him so he could support me. Thank you also to: Sharon Robertson, Toni Le Pierres, Joshua Lucey, Ben Yeuell, Sam Wong, Ali Alimi, Gail Kerr, Judith Logan, the Bansraj family, Rachel Simpkin-Bale, Sally Traynor and the Slacks Creek branch, led by Kate Grisedale and Steve Johns. There are too many other volunteers to name, but I am so appreciative to everyone who was part of our Waterford team.

Thank you to my wonderful staff in the Waterford electorate office, Louie Naumovski and Rowan Holzberger, for always going above and beyond to help our community. I give a big special mention to Rowan Holzberger, who has now left the Waterford electorate office but was given a big promotion by the good people of Forde, whom he will now represent in Canberra. We are truly lucky in Waterford to have such incredible people serve and represent our community. Congratulations to Rowan.

A big thank you to Kate Flanders and the team at the Queensland party office. I am so grateful to Kate for everything she has done to support me and our party throughout the years. A huge thank you to the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union and our broader union movement, whose continued support has been incredibly motivating for me throughout many years.

I have a special shout-out to my former chief of staff, Olivia Amsden. In 2016 Olivia started her journey with me in Waterford as an assistant electorate officer. It was very special to watch her work her way up to chief of staff of my ministerial office. Watching not only her personal achievements but also to see her mentor other younger staff in our office has filled me with great pride. Thank you, Olivia.

I also say a big thank you to all of my former ministerial staff. They were an incredibly hardworking team, driven by passion to make a real difference in our state. I am so proud of what we were able to achieve together. Thank you to Alice Gilliver for being with me since day one, Monica Irvine, Finn Semple, Stephanie Thompson, Michaela Edwards, Natarjsha Kramer—who has welcomed her beautiful baby Henley to the world—Amanda Medew, Isabelle Shoshani, Courtney Padget, Rachel Western, Mitch Condon, Maddie Cummington, Maddy Campbell, Michael Crowe, Virginia Healy, Asaesja Young and Shweta Dayal.

I could not be more excited to share that three of my former ministerial staff—Alice, Monica and Courtney—have stayed by my side and are now helping our community in the Waterford electorate office along with Louie.

I also have to thank my wonderful family. My mum, Chris, my MVP at pre-poll, never lets anyone walk past her without getting a Labor how-to-vote card in their hand. She did a wonderful job on election day. My dad, Eric; my sister, Erin and her husband, Charles; my nephews, Cormack and Finbar—I am looking forward to having a little bit more time in one of my absolutely favourite roles, which is Auntie Shannon; my parents-in-law, Kerry and Wally; and a big shout-out to my Aunty Paula and my cousin Liam, who volunteered for me on pre-poll. Of course thank you to my amazing husband, Matt Collins, for all of his support and a big thank you to our girls, Sibella and Maggie.

Our fight is not over. I am looking forward to what this term brings and I will continue to deliver for the good people of Waterford.