




Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2025

**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (12.31 pm): I want to acknowledge and reply to the terrific speech of Her Excellency the Governor at the opening of parliament, now some nine months ago. It was a pleasure to be there for the first time in a long time to listen to an opening speech that set out a clear plan for the future of Queensland that had clear ideas and a clear way forward that would deliver for the people of Queensland, not just for select groups of people, whether they are in the labour movement or otherwise—something that actually addressed what Queenslanders said was the most important thing to them at the time.

It is a delight to respond to Her Excellency's address at the opening of the 58th Parliament. It is also interesting to note that this was the first time the Governor was representing the King of Australia, King Charles III. Parliamentarians from the 33rd Parliament in 1953 until the 57th Parliament in 2020 all swore allegiance to the Queen of Australia. This time around this was the first for us all here to swear allegiance to the King of Australia, King Charles III.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I want you to pass on to Mr Speaker my thanks for the way he has diligently and with great aplomb and enthusiasm applied himself to the task of Speaker of the 58th Parliament since November. Mr Deputy Speaker McDonald, I also say thank you for the way in which you have calmly and methodically managed the House on the occasions that you have been in the chair. I have appreciated on occasions your guidance and on a number of times—actually, never—your protection. Nonetheless, I do want to congratulate you on your role. As a former sergeant in charge, I am sure you are bringing a lot of your skills to the chair.

It is good, though, that the member for Condamine is in the chair and is doing such a terrific job in that role. I also want to acknowledge his hard work in this place since he was elected as the member for Condamine in 2015 in a number of roles, including as a shadow minister. The Speaker worked on a number of committees as the shadow minister and continues to serve his community with pride, effectiveness and dedication, and that is a good thing. He has, as he said in his first speech, worked his way from the back of the chamber to the front. That has been a diligent and a long piece of work and he is thoroughly deserving of the support from this side of the House for the role—not always easy—that he has willingly accepted.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the Premier for the great honour—a somewhat surprising honour, I might say, on the morning of—that he bestowed upon me in appointing me the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. As I have often said in these circumstances, he has been very full in his support and very willing to listen to new ideas and to work to provide easier access to health services and to help heal Labor's health crisis. I want to thank him for the role that traditionally people would not have seen me in, but I have enjoyed learning a lot about it and have enjoyed making new friends and delivering services throughout the state.

A core commitment of our LNP team during last year's election campaign was to end the crisis in health and hospitals after Labor's decade in office—and crisis it was. We were elected to provide a fresh start for Queensland. Every Queenslanders, as I often say, from Currumbin to the cape and from Brisbane to Bedourie and beyond, deserves access to world-class health services. It does not matter whether they are in a health clinic on the border with the Northern Territory or whether they are sitting right here in the centre of Brisbane at the Royal Brisbane or at the PA; they deserve world-class health services. Since the election, the LNP government has been working hard at unravelling the mess that was left behind by those opposite. We inherited—and it is important to remember this—the worst ambulance ramping numbers in Australia at over 45 per cent—let's never forget that—and a record waitlist for elective surgery.

**Ms Grace:** Yeah and it's still there.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I hear the member for McConnel denying these numbers, but the numbers on the elective surgery waitlist almost doubled from 35,000 in 2015—

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That was incorrect. I take offence and I ask it to be withdrawn.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I withdraw. The member for McConnel was a member of a government that saw the worst numbers in elective surgery waiting, from 35,000 in 2015 to 66,000 by the end of 2024. The member for McConnel was a member of the government that oversaw those numbers. She sat around the cabinet table. She was there at every decision. She looked at it every step of the way and that is the result: a 100 per cent increase in elective surgery waiting lists and a list of nearly 300,000 Queenslanders waiting to see a specialist. That is the record of the Labor government that the member for McConnel was a part of every step of the way. They also failed to deliver critical infrastructure that our Hospital Rescue Plan is now set to deliver.

**Mr Bailey:** The cuts plan.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I hear the member for Miller, who has strolled in. I knew he would come. I threw the hook out there and, like a goldfish, he came bubbling along to jump onto the hook. There he goes.

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence. The minister should not sledge and he should withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr McDonald): Member for Clayfield—

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I withdraw. I heard the member for Miller come in and start interjecting from his seat over there. I think it pays to remind the House and those who are fortunate to be listening to me today that the member for Miller had to stand up and apologise for misleading the House in relation to false claims he made in this place. He is a member self-described as foolish. He described himself as a foolish minister who made mistakes, whether it was recording information on his phone or whether it was deleting information that he was lucky he was not prosecuted for, according to the CCC. That is the member for Miller's record in this place.

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Once again the minister is going low. I find what he is saying inaccurate and personally offensive. I was cleared on those matters, and I ask that he withdraw.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I withdraw. I am moving on. The member for Miller comes in here, having previously had to apologise for misleading the House—with all the record that the member for Miller has—and provides no solutions.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for McConnel, not while you are leaving the chamber, thank you.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Exactly. We know what happens to people who leave the chamber without acknowledging properly, don't we? We remember the member for Miller on that score as well. That is the member for Miller's style—not even observing the simple courtesies of this place in acknowledging the chair while departing the chamber. Let me get back to Labor's record, as bad as it was, including their failure to deliver on infrastructure that people could believe in.

We came to government with a plan to treat, diagnose and cure Labor's health crisis and to restore health services that Queenslanders deserve. What did we do? We eliminated the GP tax that Labor had in place. We published real-time hospital data. Something that Labor said could not be done we did within 100 days. We assessed staff levels across regional maternity services to understand the gaps left behind by Labor. Let's not forget: as I said in question time this morning, Labor left Biloela without birthing services for over a thousand days, shut birthing services at Gladstone and had failed to restore birthing services in Cooktown.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Miller, your interjections are not being taken.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** That is the record of a Labor government, for the vast majority of which the member for Miller sat around the cabinet table—for a decade. Let us not forget that that is the Labor record over that period of time. We are now acting—and have acted in the first nine months, as the member for Callide knows—to deliver those services. We listened to frontline clinicians—over 3,000 employees of those services, the people who actually work in them—and renamed satellite health centres to reflect the services they deliver. Imagine asking the people who work there what they thought about the name! They overwhelmingly told us that they wanted to rename them as satellite health centres.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Miller, your interjections are not being taken.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** It was not like the sham renaming undertaken by those opposite with respect to the Children's Hospital. We did not have people sitting at computer keyboards pressing the 'enter' key—

**Mr Head:** Rigged.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Rigged. We actually went out with a proper survey which asked frontline clinicians what they thought the name should be. We have delivered on those commitments. We have identified the most appropriate sites for additional CT and MRI machines to provide faster diagnostics and to reduce the need for patients to travel to another facility. We will be having a lot more to say about that over the next couple of months.

When it comes to diagnosing, to treating and to curing, the LNP Crisafulli government has wasted no time. We are cleaning up the mess that was left behind by the Labor Party and their failed members—by people who self-excluded themselves on the way through, people who knew their future was limited. We are getting on with the job of delivering easier access to health services no matter where Queenslanders might live across this great state. There will be more about that when the budget comes out this afternoon. Boy, is it going to be a cracker!

I am grateful to the electors of Clayfield for the opportunity to continue to serve Clayfield as a member of the team delivering the change Queenslanders overwhelmingly wanted in October last year. This is the seventh occasion I have been elected by the good people of Clayfield. Of course, the first time I ran as a former Brisbane City councillor, having resigned my position as a Brisbane City councillor to take on the challenge of beating the then Labor member for the seat of Clayfield, which I am happy to say I did—not as happy as my bank manager was at the time. Nonetheless, I have continued to be able to serve the people of Clayfield, and I want to thank them for their ongoing support in what have been on a number of occasions some hotly contested election battles.

It is no surprise that inner urban seats are not what they once were and the demographics are changing. Nonetheless, I thank the people of Clayfield. I have been keen to support them over a lengthy period of time—for the better part of 18 years, including two terms on the Brisbane City Council. There we saw another terrible Labor administration—the member for Miller was a part of that at the time—lose, and deservedly so. The member for Miller has a deserved reputation for losing. I was very happy to be part of the LNP council team that has been re-elected for more than 20 years. What an outstanding record that might be. In fact, I understand that the Labor team in council are now so dispirited that they have failed to turn up for budget information sessions. At the council equivalent of estimates, the Labor team did not turn up yesterday to ask questions. Imagine that. That is the quality of the Labor Party in the 21st century.

I am grateful for the support I have received from the voters of Clayfield. I also acknowledge all of those new members of this parliament. I met many of them on the campaign trail, and it is so nice to see them here today. Whether I was in Townsville, Mackay or Rockhampton, it was terrific to campaign

with hardworking local representatives. I pay tribute to them. I know that some people on both sides of the chamber lost their seats, and I want to acknowledge their service. Being an elected representative is no easy task, so I acknowledge those who lost their seats. Some we obviously will miss more than others, but I do acknowledge the service everyone puts in to representing their communities.

We had tremendous wins, as I said. The seat of Mackay had been held by Labor for more than a century, since Forgan Smith in 1915. What a welcome addition the member for Mackay has been to the team as someone who represents his community. Even at the height of Joh's popularity, Mackay was held by Labor.

**Mr Stevens:** And Rockhampton.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** And Rockhampton, as the member for Mermaid Beach says. We know the stories of crime and the crime crisis in Mackay. Police minister Dan Purdie and I went up there a number of times and we are delivering. Pumicestone elected the youngest woman ever to the Queensland parliament, after a shameful campaign by the Labor Party—a shameful campaign that diminished not the member for Pumicestone but the Labor Party because of the way they behaved. It was Labor's refusal to listen to the concerns of locals in those seats that lost them those seats and saw the LNP win. I reassure those people that we are listening and will continue to do so.

By the end of this term of government I will have served my community as an elected representative for nearly 30 years. After six years as councillor for Hamilton, I stood for election to state parliament in 2006, defeating the Labor incumbent, because I wanted to see a better Queensland—a safer Queensland, a Queensland that rewarded effort, a Queensland that acknowledged the importance of the individual, that saw the dead hand of the collective not delivering what the private sector can always deliver and deliver better.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Miller, you are warned.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I have been a proud and staunch advocate for that ever since. It has been my job to help the community I represent to adapt to change—listening to locals, not preaching to them. My kids grew up there. They have been through school there. They are still with me. That continues, in the changing nature of kids at home these days: they go and they come back. It is a community we love. In October last year they supported—again—our direction and what we said we were going to do.

We saw pre-poll voters turn up in record numbers, determined to support the Premier's fresh start. They paid no heed to the candidate from the Libertarians, who was not aided by their nominal leader there, with only 800 votes, I am pleased to say. His brilliant campaign strategy was to boast about a yellow Lamborghini parked at a pre-poll entrance. As shallow as stunts like that were, what voters told me was that the only thing motivating them was the opportunity to show Labor the door—and show Labor the door they did.

**Mr Head:** It would be better with a LandCruiser.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Yes. In a desperate attempt to buy votes, those opposite were spruiking every thought bubble their advisers dreamt up. We heard from the Deputy Premier about Steve's servos, a second government owned energy retailer to compete against the first government owned energy retailer, and allegedly free lunches for schoolchildren. Labor had the wrong priorities every step of the way. We stayed focused on the issues that mattered to people in the campaign. The No. 1 issue was rampant crime, followed by the health system failures, cost-of-living concerns and worries about how to keep the lights on, as well as where our next generation are going to find a home. We are dealing with all of those.

Queenslanders gave us a mandate to deliver a fresh start after almost a decade of a stale, out-of-touch and arrogant Labor government, and we will deliver. I also want to thank my dad, Peter, who has campaigned with me every step of the way and at 86 continues to be an avid supporter, although not quite so active, as many of you know. I thank my wife, Mary, who has continued to put on an ill-fitting T-shirt and stand at election booths, make sure the sandwiches get delivered and make sure that I am kept on the straight and narrow. To the kids, Katie, Duncan and Jeremy, who, despite their great reluctance, still come, hand out and work on election day and pre-poll and fill in some of the gaps, I want to say thank you for your love, support and commitment. It goes to show that not all the younger generation are voting the other way. Some of them know which side their bread is buttered on. My daughter, Katie, who had some fortune in earning an income recently, finally got a tax bill and said, 'Dad, it's highway robbery.' I said, 'It is, and it is always worse under Labor.' She learns the hard lessons, as you do. The kids are doing a great job and I wish them all the very best. Last October we did it without Mum for the first time ever, so this one is for her.

I also want to thank my campaign volunteers and electorate office staff for their blood, sweat and tears, surviving on a diet of muesli bars, snakes and the free coffee at the local coffee shop that I put on—free to them, not to me—manning the roadsides and election booths as well as enduring the fumes of the stinking Lamborghini at pre-poll. They have done their very best. I want to thank my campaign manager, Councillor Julia Dixon from the BCC, and my SEC chair, Matt Crossley, who worked day and night despite having two young kids. To all of my team who came out and helped me, it is a team effort, and I thank my mighty Clayfield team. I want to thank all those who supported me financially and physically on the day. I am here on the platform built by the Clayfield team. I am grateful for their support and the opportunity to again serve the voters of Clayfield and Queensland and deliver on the foundations for a fresh start that I know we will deliver over the next 3½ years.