



Speech By
Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 5 May 2015

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (8.48 pm): I stand in this House to express my sincere gratitude to the people of Currumbin for once again placing their trust in me to be their state representative in the 55th Parliament of Queensland. It is a honour and a privilege to represent such an extraordinarily beautiful place, which is home to residents who are connected and who care about our enviable lifestyle.

The 2015 state election will be remembered for its absence of policies from Labor—which should not have been surprising given that, even though they were the best resourced opposition ever, they were too lazy to create any. It pretty well sums up Labor's approach to fiscal responsibility and the economic health of our great state and its citizens: self-interest, not state interest. Unable to win in their own right, they joined forces with old mates the Greens which meant that, even though the LNP polled around 100,000 more primary votes than Labor, they were able to claim seats through the pseudo Labor Party—aka the Greens—their union comrades and other minor party preferences.

I was deeply disappointed to lose so many great colleagues including Premier Campbell Newman. Under Campbell the LNP made healthy inroads towards reducing our massive Labor debt and the 92,000 pages of suffocating red tape; however, we paid the price for doing so in such haste and failed to take the people of Queensland with us. But now it is up to Labor to find a way out of the mess they created prior to 2012. There are valid fears within the business community that planned projects are being stalled and Queensland's economy is suffering. Those fears were highlighted again with the front page of the *Courier-Mail* on Thursday, 23 April stating that the verdict was in—that industry's vote of no confidence was revealed in the ANZ/Property Council survey and CCIQ feedback that there had been drops in confidence across the wider business community.

Gold Coast members held the line and were all returned due to strong grassroots campaigns and the gratitude of the citizens of our region for the LNP's tough-on-crime legislation and the anti bikie laws. In Currumbin alone we have witnessed a significant drop in assaults, unlawful entry and robbery offences, decreasing by up to 25 per cent when comparing the periods 1 September 2013 to 28 February 2014 and 1 September 2014 to 28 February 2015. Labor's plans to downgrade some of these laws should send a shiver down the spines of law-abiding citizens. It exposes Labor's utter contempt towards our dedicated police officers by watering down laws that were having a direct effect on criminal activities. I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to Superintendent Jim Keogh and the RAP team for their outstanding efforts that have produced these impressive results and made our neighbourhoods and entertainment precincts safer. I also record my appreciation to our officers at Palm Beach, Coolangatta and the Elanora police beat.

As a long-time advocate of supporting our police with tougher legislation, I will not be silenced by name calling and the shrill, immature rantings of the Minister for Police, who is obsessed with playing the person and playing politics. She is hardly earning any respect from these officers by

criticising members of parliament who have on numerous occasions stood up for them and fought for legislation that expresses admiration for the amazing work they do. Labor's track record when it comes to being tough on crime is lacklustre to put it mildly. Labor might have voted for the new VLAD laws, but they have criticised them at every turn and now look set to weaken them.

Election campaigns require enormous amounts of people and extraordinary amounts of time, and 2015 was no different. Starting a new year with an election called in the first week caught many off guard, and I am even more grateful than usual that so many allowed their lazy summer days of watching cricket and tennis to be interrupted to assist with this election.

Politics brings out the best and the worst in people. An army of helpers—from letterbox droppers, prepoll and booth workers, food runs, sign sites and local community groups—enabled us to be on the front foot in what was a volatile campaign. Not since 2006 have we witnessed such rude behaviour, vulgar insults and bullying tactics on the booths and in our neighbourhoods from Labor supporters.

Early in the campaign information was sent to me warning me of my Labor opponent's past violent behaviour which I forwarded to police to determine if I required protection. As a result, private security was hired at a public debate and police were on hand if I needed their assistance during the campaign period. I notice the police minister laughing when I speak about this criminal activity. A padlocked wire cage in a secure car park underneath my electorate office was broken into and my parliamentary corflutes defaced. My young female electorate officer assisting me at prepoll on her break was sworn at in the most disgusting manner by a Labor booth worker. Despite having several witnesses to this lengthy tirade, my Labor opponent laughed it off. At the ballot draw, my Labor opponent shook my hand and said that he would not get personal, yet he and his wife repeatedly posted lies and negative comments about me on Facebook. If ever there were two people who should never be allowed to occupy public office, it is Ashley and Natalie Wain. They both employ underhand tactics, and nothing they say can be trusted.

Further evidence of unscrupulous behaviour from Labor was evidenced at the recent New South Wales state election. All booth workers at Tweed Civic Centre were working harmoniously until federal member Justine Elliot and her husband arrived and began shouting loudly, telling my colleague 'you are gutless and easy to intimidate'. And that is what she and her husband were doing on various booths: going around intimidating people. Even the other Labor booth workers were offended by her loud and crude language—certainly not fitting of a federal politician. But perhaps Justine's temperament was rattled as news stories had just revealed she had been referred to the New South Wales Election Commission for allegedly breaching state electoral funding laws through her anti state coalition advertisements.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all of our helpers for maintaining integrity and professionalism throughout this campaign. You really did us proud. Once again, I am indebted to my fantastic campaign team and my Currumbin branch, in particular Carley McNeil, who not only runs my electorate office but also literally worked around the clock in her own time to make sure our booths were filled, social media followed up and constituents adequately serviced. To my husband, Richard, and our two wonderful kids: your belief in me is an enormous comfort and motivates me to serve the people of Currumbin with renewed vigour and zeal.

I did not make many election promises for Currumbin; however, my pledge of \$450,000 over three years for the Currumbin Sanctuary Wildlife Hospital is one I implore the Premier to uphold. I urge the Premier to look past the politics and allocate these funds to this worthy service. Staff and volunteers go the extra mile for injured wildlife, and with numbers increasing to over 8,000 their scant resources are well and truly stretched. Their dedication is remarkable. It is not unusual for wildlife staff to come in on their days off if one of their beloved charges requires surgery. I was therefore extremely disappointed to receive the reply to my first question on notice of this parliament from the Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Not only was his reply an insult to the devoted staff and volunteers of this facility as he cast pleas for desperately needed funding aside; the tone of it was unnecessarily rude.

When Labor were in office they exploited the Currumbin sanctuary on numerous occasions by using it for cute, cuddly photo opportunities and never gave it a single cent. I am told by sanctuary staff that Kate Jones, the minister responsible during the 53rd Parliament, did not even bother to visit the facility, despite invitations to do so. In contrast, the LNP recognised the role the sanctuary plays in treatment of injured wildlife and conservation, with funding of \$100,000 for koala habitat and storage facilities. Labor just dish up lip-service when it comes to caring about our wildlife. So once again I

implore the Premier to support the sanctuary with \$450,000 over three years so they can continue their life-saving work.

Under the LNP, Currumbin saw an unprecedented injection of funds into our local schools, with \$5.7 million in capital works spent on schools within my electorate. Another \$2.26 million was allocated to clear the school maintenance backlog left by the former Labor government. Our schools had peeling paint and tired and worn-out carpet, but Labor ignored urgent repairs, preferring to build flashy new school halls instead of focusing on safe and clean learning environments.

The establishment of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority has been extremely beneficial for the southern Gold Coast. As a result of community and surfers' concerns, we were able to launch the Currumbin Estuary Safety Awareness Campaign, and I recognise my friend and colleague the member for Burleigh, who has assisted with this. This campaign comprises a multipronged approach including dedicated signage, cameras, enforcement and education as measures to mitigate the risks presented in this busy and very popular creek. I was also pleased to announce \$300,000 in infrastructure for Currumbin Creek, with two public pontoons and a revamped boat ramp providing all users greater and safer access to the waterway. I must say, though, that one of the most successful initiatives during the last term of parliament was the Get in the Game initiative, as honourable members have heard. Some 508 children in Currumbin received Get Started vouchers giving them the opportunity to participate in sport which may well not have been possible otherwise. Some 25 clubs shared in \$624,637 in funding for new facilities and equipment, with growing memberships in a range of activities from AFL and netball to water sports and lawn bowls. Through this program I was delighted to announce late in 2014 that \$1.5 million was being put towards the construction of a multisports facility at Coplick's in Tallebudgera. I look forward to watching this progress and becoming home to a range of sports and activities in the near future. But what will happen to this highly successful program that enabled children to engage in active, healthy activities? Why hasn't another round of funding been announced? What are Labor's plans for this?

The saga of the proposed quarry in the picturesque Tallebudgera Valley continues to cause enormous angst and heartache for affected residents. Together with my colleagues Michael Hart and Ros Bates, I am united in opposing this project which was commenced under a Labor government which allowed it to be recognised as a key resource area and bestowed significant project status on it. During the election campaign at least one Labor candidate on the southern Gold Coast stated that they would stop the quarry if Labor was elected, but the now Deputy Premier has dumped it back onto the Gold Coast Council, which has opposed it all along. This is yet another example of Labor creating a problem, laying the blame at someone else's feet and then expecting them to clean up its smelly mess. There is a name for people who do that, but it is unparliamentary. Labor's propensity for creating mess looks set to continue. To think the Premier, the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier failed to ask the federal government for funds to build the second stage of the light rail beggars belief—or does it? The clock is ticking for the 2018 Commonwealth Games and Labor's clumsiness and ineptness makes the Three Stooges look like masterminds.

Cruising is the fastest growing tourism sector and dredging the Trinity Inlet would have provided access for larger cruise ships. That means jobs and dollars—big dollars—for the local economy. But the Treasurer, who lives in Far North Queensland and should know how important tourism is to the region, has dismissed this project without giving it the attention it deserves. What does the member for Cairns have to say on this? He comments on plenty of other matters. The honourable member for Barron River gets it, and so did the one before him, so why doesn't the Treasurer? Has the promise of Greens payback for Labor's election support led to clouding his judgement? How can the honourable member for Mulgrave abandon the very people who voted for him by halting projects that would boost his local economy and create job opportunities in and around the Cairns region? Just what is Labor's plan for this port facility? What are its plans to support and grow tourism in Far North Queensland or other regions?

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs STUCKEY: What are its plans? I take the interjection. On the Gold Coast Labor's refusal to allow due process on the Wave Break cruise terminal proposal has been widely criticised, as the project was knocked on the head without even seeing if its environmental credentials stacked up. What sort of message does this send to investors? A negative one, that is what. And how is that standing up for workers when tradies have to drive to Brisbane and beyond for work?

This government's decision to delay power regulation for a year is another example of Labor making it up as it goes at the expense of Queenslanders. Cost of living is a key priority for residents in Currumbin and they will not be happy to learn that, rather than allow Queenslanders struggling with power bills hundreds of dollars of savings from 1 July, Labor has penalised all of us through its

interference with power prices, which will almost certainly see electricity prices go up. Families in states like Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia get cheaper bills because of deregulation, but Labor has deprived Queenslanders. The *Australian Financial Review* noted—

While the big eastern states have embraced more competition in the electricity sector and privatisation to help balance their budgets, Queensland has again shirked another sensible policy decision. Since its surprise election victory in January, the new Labor government has called for more reviews than the former Rudd federal government—on infrastructure, bikie laws, to name a few—as well as abandoning economic reform such as the \$37 billion privatisation program (which forfeited any right to the Commonwealth's \$5 billion asset recycling fund).

The articles continues—

Now the risk-averse Palaszczuk government has deferred the former Newman government's electricity price deregulation laws for the populated south-east corner which were due to come into effect on July 1.

It was a policy no-brainer which would have delivered a sharp boost in competition for the Brisbane and Gold Coast markets and led to lower prices which have been experienced in southern markets. Industry bodies say that energy retailers will be wary of diving into the northern market until deregulation is locked in, saying it is the riskiest market in Australia. Business confidence has plummeted quickly under this Labor government. On 30 April Nick Behrens from CCIQ said—

Unfortunately, the new Government's process is leading to a scenario where they are determining the appropriateness of a number of projects for themselves ... this is causing uncertainty to international investors who have seen the Labor Government rule out major projects and call-in council decisions.

And where were Labor MPs and ministers yesterday morning at the CCIQ Brisbane breakfast with the federal Minister for Small Business, Bruce Billson? Here was a perfect opportunity to talk with a federal minister and show some interest in this key sector, but there was not one Labor MP to be seen. It has not taken those opposite long to reveal not only their incompetence but also their arrogance and disregard for small business. Beware the wolf in sheep's clothing. Do not be fooled by a pleading, smiling Premier who kowtows to unions and does not give the time of day to Queensland's 410,000 small businesses.

As I said earlier, Currumbin is a connected community blessed with stunning natural landscapes and attributes that bring countless events and festivals to our picturesque location. Currumbin is also a caring community where people participate in a broad range of activities depending on their age and capability. Only recently my electorate hosted The Aussies, our national Surf Life Saving titles, and Currumbin RSL excelled itself with a week of moving Anzac centenary events, culminating with the famous dawn service on Currumbin beach nestled at the base of Elephant Rock.

Seniors have plenty to choose from too, with Coolangatta Senior Citizens in the south and Southern Gold Coast 60 and Better in Elanora offering everything from dancing to yoga, day trips and computer courses to keep their minds and bodies active. Currumbin RSL launched the Forever Young initiative and already has 170 members who enjoy various monthly activities and workshops. Individuals like Senior Constable Kurt Foessel from Elanora Police Beat have the best interests of our youth at heart. Kurt runs the successful Project Booyah which assists at-risk youth aged 14 to 17 years and was awarded Gold Coast Police Officer of the Year in 2014. There is people like Liz Fritz AM, who dedicated almost 30 years to homeless services on the southern Gold Coast and makes up the fabric of our wonderful community, to name just a few. Currumbin is the most beautiful place on this planet to live and I am truly privileged to represent it.

I want to close by saying that it was a privilege to be the minister for tourism, major events, small business and the Commonwealth Games in the 54th Parliament of Queensland. I am very proud of the partnerships that were made and the many initiatives we achieved under the DestinationQ whole-of-government strategy. Destination Success, a 20-year plan for tourism in Queensland, was the result of widespread collaboration and I hope its legacy will live on. I look forward to maintaining a lot of those relationships in my new role as the shadow minister for tourism, major events, sport and racing. With those few words, I once again thank the people of Currumbin for re-electing me as their state representative. As I said earlier, it might be five elections now, but I am just as keen and eager as I ever was.