



Speech By
Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.20 pm): Here we are in September 2018—10 months after the state election—and I am finally getting the opportunity to thank the wonderful residents of Currumbin and express my deep gratitude for once again putting their faith in me and re-electing me for a sixth term, having first done so in 2004. I tasted defeat in 2001 and did not like it one bit and neither did my dedicated team of volunteers. We worked very hard to gain the trust of residents and overcome a 14.5 per cent margin to win the seat of Currumbin three years later. It is truly an honour to be returned as the member for Currumbin, with over 47 per cent of the primary vote compared to 45 per cent in 2015.

Enormous resources are required to run campaigns, as we have heard from many other honourable members. The majority of my team have been with me for many years, and I cannot thank them enough for their loyalty, dedication and generous giving of their time. There are too many to name and, as mentioned by other honourable members, there is always the fear of leaving someone out. To my beloved Currumbin branch members and family, regional LNP chair and his wife, women's president, young LNP, Tweed Liberals and Nationals, small business owners, community advocates and anyone else who helped in any way at all: I say thank you. Together we brought Currumbin in once again for the LNP.

Families share the highs and lows of politics and no time is more testing than campaigns. My husband of 41 years, Richard, is a very seasoned campaigner and literally the wind beneath my wings. He knows me well and trusts my instincts as to how things are going. He is up before dawn and out motivating our troops on roadsides around the electorate. In fact, he became so conditioned to doing this that for a couple of weeks after the election he was on autopilot and still raring to go.

Electorate staff have an important role to play during elections, with phones running hot from residents wanting information about polling dates and locations and everyday issues that electorate officers deal with. I want to express my sincere thanks to Kerrie Maxworthy for doing an outstanding job almost single-handedly.

Currumbin is an exquisitely beautiful electorate blessed with world famous beaches and lush valleys. It is no wonder people feel connected to this region and choose to make it their home for many years. I know my family fell in love with the place 31 years ago. As I said, people in Currumbin feel connected and they are very vocal about what matters to them. Over the past 14 years I have championed countless petitions and campaigns for residents, standing side by side as we fought for a better deal.

Labor have been in power for most of my time as the member for Currumbin and, despite their efforts to starve us, we have had some significant wins—but only through shaming Labor with people power and passive public protests. First there was the Tugun bypass, a project well overdue that was finally built in 2008. Costs blew out from \$55 million to around \$543 million, making it the most expensive road per kilometre in Australia.

Even though the majority of the road was in New South Wales and there was a Labor government there, Queensland Labor could not get them to pay one cent towards construction of the bypass. This gross incompetence and cost blowouts are the hallmark of Labor governments—it is in their DNA—and Queensland taxpayers cop it, inheriting debt that will hang around their children's and their grandchildren's necks for generations.

When the Premier and Labor ministers bang on about federal funding percentages, they are too embarrassed to admit the total balls-up that was the Tugun bypass fiasco. The federal government gave Queensland 50 per cent of the cost of the project when it was \$240 million, but Labor sat on their hands and did nothing as the cost exploded to over \$500 million, resulting in a funding split of 80-20 with Queensland paying the 80 per cent.

In 2017 Labor were desperate to win Currumbin and played a cruel hoax on residents by announcing they would fund the widening of the M1 from Varsity to Tugun. They blew into town with their pseudo town hall meeting and announced a half-baked promise which was exposed on the eve of the November election when costings were revealed and there was a \$176 million shortfall.

I have worked hard for many years fighting to fix the M1, partnering with our community to demand action on the M1 between Varsity and the border, and a petition with over 10,000 signatures that called for action was tabled in this House in 2016 and forced the Palaszczuk government to commit \$5 million to funding a business case. I also lobbied the federal coalition government to commit funding, and in April this year they did just that with the Prime Minister announcing \$1 billion, which included funds for the southern section of the M1.

The Palaszczuk government stamped their feet and refused to commit funds even though opposition leader Shorten jumped in and said he supported the funding model. Then the Premier sent 'Minister Mangocube' out to throw another of his hissy fits before finally succumbing to the strong media campaign run by the *Gold Coast Bulletin* and public pressure. However, the Palaszczuk government's reluctance to fund the M1 upgrade exposed them as the fraudsters that they are when they made election promises they had no intention of meeting in the foreseeable future.

On 7 December 2017 in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* the member for Gaven said Labor were 'crystal clear' on the M1. That is hard to believe when Labor had to be dragged kicking and screaming to match federal funds. The member for Gaven has only been in this place for a matter of months, yet she has the arrogance to take credit for the M1—an issue for which many of us here in this House have fought hard for many years. She was not here when the \$5 million was committed for the business case and did nothing to advance the cause but now wants full glory for it. The member might feel important swanning around at ritzy tourism events, but I hear the people of Gaven would rather she was attending to their needs.

Koala conservation and protection is valued in my electorate. Currumbin's Labor candidate pretended to take an interest and made much of her party's strong stance on koala protection, stating on one of her rehearsed and insincere videos—

I'm here today with Environment Minister, Steven Miles, on Tallebudgera Connection Road. The Tally Valley is home to a sustainable koala population. However, the deaths of 10 koalas on this road just this year has local residents seriously concerned about the continued viability of the population.

Minister Miles said on the video—

Thanks for inviting me down here to see this stretch of road ... The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital tells us that this is a real hotspot sadly for koala deaths. We know that the koala population, particularly in the south-east, is under threat. We can all do something about it by driving more safely on roads like this one. We've put an expert in place to tell us exactly what policy settings to put in place to give our koalas a better chance of survival.

Minister Miles went on to say that he would meet with the main roads minister to talk about what we can do on this particular stretch of road and to stay tuned between now and the election to see what a re-elected Labor government will do to protect habitat and protect our koalas.

Well, according to the Minister for Main Roads in a reply to a resident's petition, koala deaths are not occurring on this road and there is no need to reduce speed limits there. Further, the report from the Koala Expert Panel that was due on 30 June 2017 was only released on Friday, 11 May, coincidentally the day after I asked the minister a question on notice. So much for koala protection! What hypocrites they are, every single one of them—fake, insincere frauds.

My track record proves I am a genuine advocate for koalas, having personally invested many thousands of dollars of my own money in the wildlife hospital and financially sponsoring the naming of five joeys whom I enjoy visiting immensely. Once again, I commend the tireless work of senior vet Dr Michael Pyne and his dedicated team of staff and volunteers who treat over 10,000 injured wildlife every year. The LNP promised \$1 million over four years to help this amazing facility to function. With no promise that Labor will continue funding past 2019, our hospital and its miracle workers face uncertainty about their future.

Recognising the challenges faced by people who live on state borders, the LNP committed to install a cross-border commissioner tasked with solving problems across Queensland and New South Wales and a roving brief to coordinate with and across all departments.

An opposition member: Great policy.

Mrs STUCKEY: It was a great policy. Living on the most densely populated border in the nation, we face a raft of unique challenges with the provision of services, rules and regulations and different time zones. Since 2008, I have been working with Tweed MP Geoff Provest and more recently the New South Wales Cross Border Commissioner to get a better deal for our border inhabitants and pushing for more streamlined processes in relation to cross-border policing, small business regulation, child safety services and transport, to name a few.

The Palaszczuk government have had little interest in resolving the many differences faced by residents and have dragged their feet on this issue. Granted, Labor finally signed off on a statement of principles that would see more engagement between both states' agencies, but it has been a case of push and prod from New South Wales to get things moving. The annual work list due at the end of June has not yet appeared, like so many of Labor's reviews and reports. The ALP in Victoria are investing in a cross-border commissioner but not Queensland.

After two years of requests from local high school principals and senior police for a school based police officer, the LNP promised to allocate one to our two high schools with students in the electorate. The SBPOs, as they are known, have proven to be highly effective in reducing aggressive behaviours, drugs and bullying in schools. It is truly disappointing that Labor, who we all know are soft on crime, have not only refused this position but are also tampering with the policy as stated by the assistant commissioner at last year's estimates. Meanwhile suspensions rise, assaults rise, bullying rises and a proven strategy such as SBPOs is denied. Now the entire independent public school system is under threat with the Queensland Teachers' Union demanding the program be killed off. What is Labor trying to hide by refusing to release their secret IPS review?

I move to the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Much has already been said, but as a former games minister and a member whose electorate hosted three different sporting events I make the following comments. What should have been a showcase like no other from beginning to end with athletes taking centre stage was compromised by political interference that ashamed millions of Queenslanders and Australians. Thank goodness for our true-blue athletes and those from across the 71 nations of the Commonwealth who embodied the spirit of these friendly games. I am proud to have been a minister in the LNP government that secured all 17 venues and the athletes village, laying a solid foundation for the smooth running of sporting events in top-class venues and guaranteeing a built legacy of modern sporting infrastructure.

Media tart Peter Beattie hogged TV screens and imposed politically correct nonsense on us. The opening and closing ceremonies were a total embarrassment. As quoted in the media, they were a \$40 million stuff-up—an insult—but the ultimate sin was shutting our athletes out of the closing ceremony. Minister Jones would have been advised of the program for the closing ceremony. Her director-general would have known. I used to speak to mine several times a day. Did the minister own up to not doing her homework or to doing nothing about this appalling omission? No, the member for Cooper tried to shift the blame, like she always does, and point the finger at someone else.

All the Premier was concerned about was whether she got a speaking gig and Minister Jones was busy making sure she had a different dress each day while staying at five-star accommodation. The Premier got her speaking gig, made an apolitical event political and was so rude she did not even acknowledge His Royal Highness Prince Edward. What a disgraceful lack of protocol!

There were countless tales of restricted ambulance access, no car parks for Brisbane train commuters to get to work and 3,000 sales a day lost to Coolangatta traders as park-and-ride ticket holders had to leave after each volleyball session. Meanwhile, correct and timely information about limitations on small businesses and residents alike was withheld and those who complained were labelled whingers or lunatics, told they were exaggerating and told to suck it up.

Over 450 complaints came through my office prior to the commencement of the games, not from whingers but from people who had genuine concerns about dialysis appointments or cancelled child care. Bus contracts went to an interstate company whose drivers took volleyball competitors to Brisbane instead of Coolangatta. People in wheelchairs were stranded at a light rail station because buses did not have the necessary low floors. Surfside Buslines, which was discarded as a contractor, had to come in and rescue these poor abandoned souls.

Volunteers were told to neuter who we are, cover up our outgoing, gregarious, sociable nature, be un-Australian and address people as 'folks'. Apart from the athletes, my most ingrained and fond memory of the 2014 Glasgow games is of the amazing volunteers. Their Scottishness and Englishness was infectious and so welcoming. Many of our volunteers thankfully ignored those PC directions and will be remembered with the same fondness the world over, I am sure.

Beattie tells people to suck it up—that the legacy will be worth it. He even tried to spin it that the M1 upgrades are a legacy of the games. That is fine for him with his plum job and the thousands of Goldoc employees on outrageously high salaries. It reveals contempt for the small business owner and a total lack of understanding or consideration of their circumstances.

Labor members come into this place and bang on insincerely about how much they help small businesses. I have not heard one of them speak up for them when it comes to lost trade and disruptions. A number of our small businesses who were negatively affected for periods of six weeks and more are now seeking compensation for lost trade, and I do not blame them. Withholding key information as to how businesses would be affected was criminal. Labor did not care about hundreds of small businesses in my electorate, and each time I tried to speak up for them, as I am now, and get answers I was labelled a whiner. That is how Labor sees small businesses—as whingers. That is why they pay them lip-service while strangling them with regulations. I am speaking up for them, and to hell with the pathetic criticisms and mutterings from those opposite.

Then there are the legacy items. Currumbin deserves a fair share. Minister Jones spoke at our local chamber breakfast just before the games commenced and told those present she would look into small business concerns and legacy items, but we got very little and businesses are being totally ignored. The member for Cooper says one thing in front of a crowd but then does another. True to form, when things go bad for the member for Cooper she ducks for cover and blames someone else. She has no shame. She cannot help herself. If only the general public saw the real Kate Jones and the way she behaves here in this House—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Currumbin, you have been warned by the Speaker, as has everyone in the House, that you need to refer to members in this House by their correct title.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. If the general public saw the real member for Cooper and the way she behaves here in this House they would see an individual who is prepared to twist the truth for political gain. However, I am pleased that one of the Borobi mascots now lives in the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary.

Without doubt, the 2017 state campaign was a dirty one, with Labor using under-age volunteers, intimidating and threatening to 'drop' older workers. One youth even paid lip-service to a female policewoman who told him he had been warned and she would not tolerate him anymore. This was a young man who attended youth parliament in 2017. Astonishingly, the booth captain, Katrina Beikoff, who ran for council for Labor in 2015 and wants to run again, did not see anything wrong with his behaviour and did not attempt to admonish this minor.

My car windscreen was smashed while I was at a Tallebudgera booth. It was suggested a golf ball was responsible but police and forensics ruled that out. It was ugly vandalism. Labor played the age card and said that I was a career politician. They cannot have it both ways. I did not start my political career until I was 45, by which time I had raised my family and successfully run my own small business. That is more than can be said for my Labor opponent, who did not live in the electorate and who ran in Mudgeeraba in 2015. That is what you call a deceitful opportunist.

I was deeply disappointed with the behaviour of a couple of local community groups who are supposedly apolitical—Philip Follent, in particular, who personally funded the ALP candidate's campaign and sent personal emails asking people to vote for the ALP. Labor's candidate left some of her corflutes up for weeks after the election which annoyed many residents, especially as she had covered the electorate with them with no respect for where she put them—even putting them outside our RSL on Remembrance Day. Labor spent a lot of money on their campaign to win Currumbin with an outsider, but the people who live in this wonderful electorate saw through it. Once again, I thank them from the bottom of my heart—a heart that beats for my beloved Currumbin with her beauty and her amazing people.

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge Julie Bishop, a leading light for women in politics. I agree with her, as I told the ASPG gathering here on Monday evening, that the behaviour in parliament would not be tolerated in most other workplaces. I am surprised there are not more suicides and MPs on depression medications. It concerns me greatly that bullying and intimidation have become the accepted norm in this place and other parliaments.

In Queensland, women are as bad as or worse than men. Like Julie, I am not completely innocent of dishing it up, but sadly new members adopt the practice early on. It is one thing to call someone out on failures and behaviour, but now it is just nasty sledging. No wonder the general public have had enough and are tuning out as the quality of debate suffers. Today in question time the Premier took standards to a new low by targeting the child of an MP. That is gutter politics and must be condemned.

In closing, I would like to reinforce my commitment to and love of the people in Currumbin and thank them for re-electing me for a sixth time in this place to represent them. I will continue to do so fiercely and with strong advocacy.