



Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 11 March 2021

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.08 pm): I acknowledge the Governor of Queensland and I am privileged to again rise to reply to his address, the fifth time I have had the opportunity to do so. At the outset I acknowledge the people of Glass House. To those of you who voted for me and for the LNP, I say thank you. To those of you who did not, I also say thank you. It is because of you I remain humble.

Let me be honest: while I accept the outcome of the 2020 election, I am bitterly disappointed. I am disappointed that Deb Frecklington, the member for Nanango, is not the Premier of this great state. The member for Nanango has to be the hardest working, most personable, friendly and genuine leader I have had the privilege of working alongside. I commend her for all of the effort she put in not only during the election campaign but across the three years of her leadership. Queenslanders will only know in the future what they have missed out on with the member for Nanango not becoming the Premier.

I am equally disappointed that the member for Nanango's vision for Queensland will not come to fruition—a vision that, as the then shadow minister for infrastructure, manufacturing, planning and a range of other things, would have seen an economy booming through investment in infrastructure, roads, dams, the New Bradfield Scheme and, more importantly, in frontline services to ensure all Queenslanders get their health needs met, their education needs provided for and their child protection and youth justice needs delivered.

I am also disappointed for the electorate of Glass House. As did the member for Bonney before me, as did all members on this side of the chamber, I put forward a positive plan for Glass House. It addressed the real concerns of the constituents of Glass House. For starters, we were going to tackle many of the problem roads in the electorate. We were going to finally get the design work done on Mount Mee Road between Dayboro and Ocean View, a road that is unsafe but also sees huge traffic in motorbikes and cyclists, in particular on the weekends. We would have installed traffic lights at the intersection of the D'Aguilar Highway and Campbells Pocket Road in Wamuran—something that after repeated petitions and letters to the minister this government does not see as a priority.

We would have, on top of the money already allocated to upgrade some two kilometres worth of Maleny-Kenilworth Road at Cambroon, invested a further \$5 million to upgrade Maleny-Kenilworth Road between Maleny and Witta and we would have fixed the debacle that is Beerburum Road where, because of a dreadful road surface, this government has lowered the speed limit from 100 kilometres to 80 kilometres instead of fixing the road.

More than that, we would have kept kids safe at Mooloolah State School by putting flashing school zone lights in. We would have provided for the health needs of the Maleny and Blackall Range community by putting \$1 million towards their new hydrotherapy centre, something that is particularly poignant for me because of the role my dear friend Joyce Newton played in trying to establish that and the subsequent indoor aquatic centre for Maleny.

Again something near and dear to my heart would have been our investment in EndED—end eating disorders—in their step-out facility on the Sunshine Coast. To Mark Forbes, to his wife Gay, Millie and their team, I am sorry that we have not been able to deliver that for you. I know you have found ways to do that yourself and that shows just how good you are at making sure those individuals who are suffering from eating disorders around our state and their families and loved ones have the services they need to beat that insidious disease.

It is pretty clear that COVID played a significant role in the outcome of the election.

Mr Stevens: As per the previous speaker.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. I commend the people of Glass House for the way they persevered through 2020, the way they responded to the health concerns and to the restrictions placed on them. I particularly acknowledge those constituents in the Moreton Bay Regional Council half of Glass House who had further restrictions placed on them again earlier this year. There were many people who were fearful during 2020. There are many people who are still fearful. What disappoints me is that those opposite chose to play politics with that fear.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr POWELL: I had a look for a suitable quote and this one comes from Swiss philosopher Tariq Ramadan—

Fear and its accompanying emotional reactions have become part of the public mindset. Such reactions, while often legitimate, are also being exploited with increasing frequency for political ends.

There is no question that that is what occurred during last year's election campaign. The people of Glass House, the people of Queensland more broadly, were scared into voting for a government that has done nothing to demonstrate it has a vision for this state.

Mr Power interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Members, I am not tolerating disorderly interjections during the address-in-reply. Please stop interjecting. Member for Logan, you are warned under the standing orders.

Mr POWELL: The English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge said that in politics, what begins with fear usually ends with folly and failure. I suspect that is exactly what we will see play out over the coming term.

As we move out of this COVID environment other issues must again become a priority. I want to at this point congratulate the member for Broadwater, David Crisafulli, and the member for Toowoomba South, David Janetzki, on their ascension to the roles of leader and deputy leader of the LNP. I know that under their leadership this team will continue to hold the government accountable, not only for their actions but also for their integrity.

We will ensure that what the people of Queensland—what the people of Glass House—need continues to be delivered, such as, as I said, Maleny-Kenilworth Road. The people of Cambroon, Conondale and Kenilworth were sold a pup early last year. They were told that section of goat track was going to be fixed up. It was not until the budget came out, albeit a delayed budget, that we found out that that work is not going to start until 2023-24. That is not acceptable.

Mr Crandon: Typical. They are doing the same thing on the northern Gold Coast.

Mr POWELL: Exactly, member for Coomera. I will continue to fight for those upgrades that we in the LNP promised between Maleny and Witta. Recently Mr Brian Kennedy came into my office. He brought with him a letter dated 28 February 2005. It stated—

As you are aware, the Department of Main Roads is currently investigating a section of the Maleny Road, between Dixon Avenue and Curramore Road, to carry out planning for possible roadworks in the area.

It goes on to say—

After considering a number of options for improvement, we have tabled a preferred option.

This is in 2005. It goes on—

The proposed option includes rehabilitation and widening works to improve the safety of this section of road focusing on the following key issues:

Upgrading intersections

Realigning dangerous corners

Improving visibility

Increasing overtaking opportunities

Providing pull off areas

Maintaining current speed limits

Mr Kennedy and I are appalled that this government has done nothing since 2005 to address that and we will continue to push for it. I mentioned the debacle at Beerburum Road. I thank Kirsty Levis and the people of Beerburum for agreeing to put up a petition. I thank the owner of B&Y Waste Services who took me in one of their trucks along Beerburum Road to demonstrate how dangerous and unsafe it is. We will not stop until that road is resurfaced and the 100 kilometre speed limit returned.

To the residents of Mount Mee, Ocean View, Dayboro and King Scrub, we will get Mount Mee Road fixed. To the people of Wamuran and further west, we will get those lights installed at Campbells Pocket Road; I will not stop. I will continue to advocate for EndED for the services that they provide to people with eating disorders.

As I have spoken about recently, I want to see a full review of the School Transport Assistance Scheme. For too long we as members of parliament, the governments of both political persuasions and the bureaucrats have hidden behind a policy that is antiquated. It does not gel with me that officials within the Department of Transport and Main Roads can dictate to parents which schools their kids must attend. We need to review this. If the education department is telling parents that this is the school that they need to be sending their kids to then that is the school we need to provide subsidised transport to, not two or three other options. I will not stop until that is delivered. We have a petition going and I encourage all parents to sign it.

Another pet project of mine is roadside vegetation management in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay. I acknowledge this began when we were in government and put out a contract, a contract that has subsequently been put out again with even worse outcomes. Last year was a pretty tough year for tourism in our part of the world, but towards the end of last year it actually started booming. In February I received a letter from booking.com and I will read part of it—

In a year the Australia's tourism industry faced unparalleled challenges, Booking.com has examined millions of customer reviews on what makes Australia's tourism destinations special. Out of 220 countries and territories, Australia placed 14th for the highest number of awards. This year, our Traveller Review Awards 2021 have uncovered the top ten Most Welcoming Destinations in the country.

The top five tourism destinations are: No. 1, Maleny, Queensland, in the electorate of Glass House; No. 2, somewhere called Denmark in Western Australia; No. 3, Hervey Bay in Queensland; No. 4, Margaret River, which I suspect is just up the road from Denmark in Western Australia; and No. 5 is Montville, Queensland, in the electorate of Glass House. The letter goes on to say—

The Booking.com Traveller Review Awards 2021 show that Booking.com accommodation and travel partners in Maleny and Montville have made travel experiences more memorable for tourists this year despite all the challenges they faced. The Ranking reveals insights into traveler preferences throughout the past year, uncovering that travelers appreciate staff, cleanliness and location most when reviewing award-winning properties on the platform, with those attributes scoring highest among the categories that travelers rate following their stay.

My full commendation goes to the Maleny and Montville chambers of commerce for the work they have done with tourism operators in promoting our part of the world—their product—to the rest of the world and particularly to South-East Queensland and the broader Australian nation. However, the Montville Chamber of Commerce continues to write to the Minister for Main Roads asking him to do something about the appalling state of our roadsides. They sent their latest letter on 31 January and it states—

It should be of no surprise to local residents to notice how the Blackall Range Tourist Drive roadside is to be found but again grossly overgrown with places where roadside signs are hardly visible. Right when the businesses in the region are in one of the peak times for tourist visitations! An unsightly contribution to promoting the Hinterland!

The Montville Chamber of Commerce would like you as our State Government representative to highlight our concerns to the Minister for DTMR as to how his arrangements for contract mowing is working against the interests of the Maleny-Montville-Mapleton region whose local economy relies heavenly on tourism.

I would add the areas of Mount Mee and Ocean View. The letter continues—

We understand that DTMR defines its road signage for Tourist Drive as being a connector to tourist destinations. However, the distinct colour coding of Tourist Drive signage seen on the road, does strongly suggest that the Tourist Drive itself, is in its own right a tourist destination to be experienced.

I say to the government: mow your roads. If you lived in a street where the government was your neighbour and was responsible for keeping its front yard clean, you would move out of that street. The situation is appalling. They have had an opportunity to fix it through recent contracts and they have not done so.

I will also be working with constituents on the rollout of the Beerburum to Nambour rail project, particularly concerned residents around Barrs Road where we will be getting a new overpass. While many in the community will welcome that, this week I asked a question on notice about some of the

concerns of Barrs Road residents. I ask the minister to consider holding another consultation with that community on a weekend, rather than at midday on a weekday when they are all at work. I will be writing to the minister in that regard.

I will continue to work with local farmers around farm labour. We have had some small wins but we need more and we need them quickly. I will continue to work with my constituents and local police to address hooning. As we heard this morning, we must address housing affordability so that we can help people such as Estelle from Elaman Creek, Pollyanna from Eudolo, Stephanie, and Darren and Kate from Maleny who have a family of nine and are only days away from being homeless. We must address that issue for this generation and for generations to come.

I note the government is looking for pilot areas for new growth. I can tell the House that we have the perfect one in Glass House which—as I said in my maiden speech 12 years ago—is the area around Elimbah. Elimbah is on a railway line and is less than an hour from the city. We also need to look at the legislation around tiny homes. There is much more that I will continue to lobby for.

This is my fifth term in this place and, as I said, I am humbled. I am here because I represent the LNP and I represent the values that the LNP stands for. We stand for freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association. We stand for the family as the indispensable forum where children are raised and nurtured. We stand for government that has a sustainable level of debt that does not impose an unfair burden on future generations. We believe in the worth and dignity of every individual, the priority of helping the marginalised and public and personal integrity, and that they underpin our society.

I am here because of tireless family members and LNP volunteers. I do not normally do this but I want to read the names of everyone who helped me: Alex, Andrew, Ann, Barb, Bill and Marlene, Sharpie, Bob, Bob, Gail, Nicole and Paul, Bridget, Bruce, Carter, Clif, Coral, Daryl, Dave and Bev, Dave, Donna, Doug, Frangi, Gerry and Nevenka, my brother Glenn, my brother Jonathon, Greg and Ann, Greg, Hamish and Anne, Harry, Harvey, James and Marjorie, Janet, Jennifer, JJ, John TK, John and Bruna, John W, Julie, Karen, Kel and Lorraine, Kerry, Kim, Lesley and John, Lisa, Lorna and Lyn, Lou, Marcus, Martin and Rowena, Mary, my parents Pam and Steve, Peter C, Pete and Doris, Peter P, Peter S, Robin, Roy, Ruth, Sandy and Diana, Sandy, Shane, Stan, Val, Vanessa, Wim and Zack. I am here because of you.

I am here because of my amazing staff, Lauren and Bek. Tragically, their combined ages do not even equal mine. They are helping me reach a younger generation though. I particularly acknowledge Lauren who recently announced that she is pregnant with her first child. Congratulations! Don't worry: we will be right without you and will welcome you back when you are ready. I know that you will enjoy parenthood. I am here because of the love and support of Taryn and my kids, who have put up with a lot over the past 12 years.

I conclude where I started: I am here because of the people of Glass House and I thank them. I will strive to continue to represent them all to the very best of my ability.