




Speech By  
**Dr Christian Rowan**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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**ADDRESS-IN-REPLY**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.48 pm): I begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. Mr Speaker, I also congratulate you on your appointment to high office. I acknowledge the re-election of the Palaszczuk Labor government.

It is indeed a great privilege and honour to rise again as the state member for Moggill in the 56th Queensland parliament. I formally place on record my thanks and appreciation to the residents and constituents of the electorate of Moggill for their trust and support in re-electing me to this place.

At the outset, I also acknowledge and thank my wife, Jane, and Nicholas, Charley, Angus and Lucie for their support, as well as their ongoing words of advice and wisdom. I know all representatives here today join with me in acknowledge the sacrifices made by wives, husbands, partners, children and other family members of elected parliamentarians.

I recognise the service of former LNP opposition leaders, the honourable Tim Nicholls MP, the member for Clayfield, and the Hon. Lawrence Springborg, the former member for Southern Downs, during the 55th Queensland parliament. I congratulate the honourable Deb Frecklington MP, the member for Nanango, on her ascendancy to the position of LNP leader.

I am very proud to be a servant of my local area, a place that I call home and a place that has many distinct and unique communities. Moggill is also the electorate that I grew up in. When I think of my childhood, I recall season after season playing for the Kenmore Cricket Club and the then Kenmore soccer club, now the University of Queensland Football Club, the UQFC, as well as hours riding BMX bikes around the streets of Kenmore, including Aberfeldy Street, Mabb Street, Orkney Street and Rothesay Street, as well as Aldergrove Street in Chapel Hill, to name just a few.

As is still the case today, I recall being a part of many local community events and celebrations with family, friends and neighbours, including the Castley, McPhee, Wareham, Bodman, McDonald, Bristow, Ryan and Jukes families. In relation to one of the aforementioned families, I acknowledge local Chapel Hill resident Mr Bill Bristow AM, the founder and CEO of Angel Flight. Bill has made an enormous contribution to Queensland and Australia with the establishment of his national charity and community service organisation, which assists those who are geographically isolated and in need of assistance to get to and from health appointments. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to both Bill and his wife, Wendy, with respect to their charity work. I also acknowledge their granddaughter, Amy Bristow, who has recently been inducted as a school captain at Brookfield State School for 2018.

During my previous term as the state member for Moggill, I was able to deliver significant funding for local community and sporting organisations, as well as provide for some important local road safety improvements. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to assist many constituents with an extensive range of issues and I look forward to continuing to do this again over the next three years. However, as was the case during my previous elected term, I will continue to argue for enhanced funded improvements

to Moggill Road to ease traffic congestion, a sustainable solution to fix the Kenmore roundabout, as well as the delivery of an integrated road and public transport plan for the western suburbs of Brisbane, including the electorate of Moggill. This must be comprehensively funded as a priority.

Despite the Palaszczuk Labor government failing to address those issues during its last term and Labor's ongoing opposition to an additional high school, as well as its opposition to a proper investment in Kenmore State High School's infrastructure master plan, as the state member for Moggill I will continue to argue strongly for such infrastructure investment. I will continue to be a champion for our area on those issues.

Queensland, including the electorate of Moggill, needs a state government that has proper strategies, solutions and plans to ease cost-of-living pressures, as well as policies that will assist with local job creation by supporting small business and, in doing so, will achieve real sustainable economic development. It is not good enough that under Labor Queensland now has an unemployment rate of 6.1 per cent. Additional emergency services resourcing for local police, fire and ambulance stations in the electorate of Moggill must be planned for now, with transparent funding timelines able to be shared with local residents.

At the most recent state election held on 25 November 2017, both I and the Liberal National Party offered a commitment to progress and complete a set of integrated road and public transport solutions in collaboration with other levels of government in order to alleviate traffic congestion. This was contingent upon the LNP winning government. Both the Liberal National Party and I were committed to the re-establishment of the Queensland independent schools planning commission in order to get the delivery of additional educational infrastructure right for the electorate of Moggill.

The Liberal National Party also announced policies to freeze family car registration, reduce electricity prices and deliver energy security and energy reliability for residents of the Moggill electorate. We also outlined our plans to deliver a better healthcare system and ensure more balanced environmental and key industry outcomes. Community safety was a paramount consideration of ours and will continue to be so. Unfortunately, with the Palaszczuk state Labor government having been re-elected, those election commitments cannot be delivered by the LNP during this term of government.

However, all is not lost as at the 2017 state election the local Labor candidate for Moggill, on behalf of the Queensland Labor party and the Palaszczuk Labor government, gave a commitment that the Labor Party would fund infrastructure solutions to ease traffic congestion on Moggill Road if the two party preferred margin was five per cent. Given that this is the case, any failure by the Labor Party and the Palaszczuk state Labor government not to deliver a strong financial investment of infrastructure funding in the upcoming state budget or subsequent budgets of this parliamentary term will lead to Labor being judged harshly by local residents, with many local constituents already believing that Labor's slogans and words for our local area are false, misleading and/or duplicitous.

Only time will tell, but I will certainly maintain an open door and consultative approach with this Labor government and other elected representatives in this place in order to get infrastructure solutions not only for the electorate of Moggill but also for right across the western suburbs of Brisbane.

At this point I acknowledge and pay tribute to the former member for Indooroopilly, Scott Emerson, and the former member for Mount Ommaney, Tarnya Smith. Both were unwavering in their commitment and service to their local communities and to the Liberal National Party over many years.

During the last term of parliament, it was an honour to serve as the shadow minister for the environment and heritage protection and the shadow minister for national parks and the Great Barrier Reef. Being able to achieve an endorsed LNP parliamentary position and then being able to provide bipartisan support for legislation enacting the container deposit scheme, also known as the container refund scheme, as well as a ban on single-use plastic bags are things that I am enormously proud of given the environmental benefits, reduced visual pollution, support for community groups and, in the case of the CDS, the additional jobs the scheme will create in Queensland.

Recently at Bellbowrie Shopping Plaza, along with the Moggill Girl Guides I attended the local launch of Boomerang Bags. Well done to Fran Alt, Natasha Alt, Alison Bond and all the staff of the Bellbowrie Brumby's bakery and Greengrocers Pantry for their leadership in partnering with our local Girl Guides to reduce the harms of plastic bags. In collaboration with the Moggill SES, Fran Alt also makes an enormous contribution to our local community by donating unsold bakery produce to vulnerable families. My congratulations go to Fran's granddaughter, Jorge, who has recently been appointed to Kenmore State High School's student representative council.

In Queensland the war on waste must continue with ongoing efforts to reduce landfill, to reduce food waste and to implement a comprehensive plastic waste reduction strategy that will reduce environmental and health harms, particularly those involving microplastics. I wish my colleague the member for Broadwater, David Crisafulli MP, all the best with such public policy considerations, as well as with holding the Labor government to account in his new role as LNP shadow minister for the environment, science and the Great Barrier Reef and shadow minister for tourism.

In this parliamentary term I am delighted to have been given the additional roles of shadow minister for communities, shadow minister for disability services and seniors, shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and shadow minister for the arts. Having read a number of documents already, including *Partnering for the future: advancing Queensland's community services industry 2017-25* and *Partnering for the future: action plan 2017-18*, clearly there is a range of significant community sector evolution and innovation occurring in relation to service provision, financial and funding arrangements and workforce development, as well as the capacity for technology to augment and enable better outcomes for all.

Resilient individuals, families and communities can achieve social wellbeing and enhance the economic productivity of Queensland. Fostering partnerships between government, not-for-profit service providers, tertiary organisations and the private sector can ensure effective service delivery, as well as enable best practice to be achieved via ongoing evidence based translational research.

To date there has also been a tremendous amount of collaborative work between our state jurisdiction of Queensland and the Commonwealth with respect to the implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the effective operation of the National Disability Insurance Agency. The complexity of this transformational change cannot be underestimated, and already I have been briefed on the significant efforts of collaboration and coordination being undertaken in order to ensure a smooth transition for all participants.

Supporting those with a disability in our community to be connected and participate, whilst also developing the capacity of communities to become more inclusive of those with a disability, is vitally important from a public policy perspective. The NDIS is an enabling process that will empower recipients of disability services. As such, the NDIS will assist with important person-centric health, social, employment and economic benefits for many Queenslanders and Australians. Individual participant plans require the input of good knowledgeable planners, with the transparent communication of intended plan outcomes and both provider and participant experiences captured for quality assurance and quality improvement.

For effective outcomes, ongoing collaboration, coordination and communication with general practitioners and primary health networks will be critical given their key involvement with the NDIS access request forms and coordinating care roles. The state Labor government must take responsibility and ensure non-eligible NDIS participants and their related services are also adequately funded into the future.

In my electorate of Moggill, the McIntyre Centre Riding for the Disabled has had a long and proud history of serving those with a range of disabilities. In 2017 the McIntyre Centre merged with HELP Enterprises in order to ensure the McIntyre Centre's sustainability well into the future. The unique equine therapy programs provided by the McIntyre Centre combined with the capital resources, supported employment opportunities, housing, day programs and respite facilities of HELP will enable a broader range of services to be offered to those with a disability who are currently accessing the service. Such organisational change can be difficult, but with appropriate community engagement, ongoing goodwill and a shared sense of purpose, I am sure the service can go from strength to strength.

In August 2017 I attended the inaugural HELP Enterprises-McIntyre Centre Riding for Disabled Charity Race Day. It was terrific to see the member for Gympie, the honourable Tony Perrett MP, and his wife, Michelle, in attendance, as well as the now leader of the LNP opposition and member for Nanango, the honourable Deb Frecklington MP.

I would also like to make mention of the School of Hard Knocks. In Queensland both I and the Labor member for Nudgee, Leanne Linard MP, are honorary patrons of the School of Hard Knocks Queensland. A number of the participants accessing School of Hard Knocks programs suffer with significant disadvantage including homelessness, mental health disorders, substance dependency or other health conditions.

The ongoing efforts of Jonathon Welch AM and his Queensland team, including operations manager Susan Gilmartin, the Absolutely Everybody Brisbane Choir Program leader Melissa Gill, the Word on the Street creative program leader David Stavanger, the Rhythm of Life music theatre program leader Jacqui Cuny, and Street Beat percussion program leader Darryl Bowers to foster the participation

of many with disadvantage in the mainstream social, economic and cultural life of our state and nation is certainly to be applauded and acknowledged. This is not just because of the social and recreational aspects of the School of Hard Knocks' programs, but also because of the independently validated health, educational, economic and employment outcomes of individual participants.

In relation to my shadow portfolio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, there is still so much to be done, particularly with respect to practical reconciliation. During the recent state election, the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland stated—

Health outcomes in regional, rural and remote Queensland can be improved through doing things differently, not necessarily by throwing dollars at problems. Indigenous communities especially deserve equitable access to quality primary care that can be achieved with better co-ordination, better communication and asking communities what they want and what they need to make things happen.

As RDAQ President, Dr Konrad Kangru, said—

Local communities are local experts. It's not rocket science for Queensland Health to engage deeply instead of consulting superficially.

I will certainly use my medical organisational and professional experience to guide me.

On the 10-year anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generation recently, our current Prime Minister, the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, gave an update on Closing the Gap targets. Nationally three of the seven Closing the Gap targets are on track while four are not. The target to halve the gap in child mortality by 2018 is on track. Over the period 1998 to 2016 the Indigenous child mortality rate has declined by 35 per cent and there has been a narrowing of the gap by 32 per cent. Improvements in key drivers of child and maternal health over the past few years suggest there are further gains to be made.

The target to ensure 95 per cent of all Indigenous four-year-olds are enrolled in early childhood education by 2025 is on track. In 2016 around 14,700 Indigenous children were enrolled in early childhood programs. The target to halve the gap in year 12 attainment by 2020 is on track. Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous 20- to 24-year-olds who had achieved year 12 or equivalent increased from 47.4 per cent in 2006 to 65.3 per cent in 2016.

However, the target to close the gap in school attendance by 2018 is not on track. Also the target to halve the gap in reading and numeracy by 2018 is not on track. The target to halve the gap in employment by 2018 is not on track, with Indigenous employment rates falling slightly over the past decade. Finally, the target to close the gap in life expectancy by 2031 is not on track. Between the periods 2005 to 2007 and 2010 to 2012 there was a small reduction in the gap of 0.8 years for males and 0.1 years for females. Over the longer term, Indigenous mortality rates have declined by 14 per cent since 1998.

I also take this opportunity to call on the Palaszczuk Labor government to continue funding for the Indigenous Diabetes Eyes and Screening, IDEAS, van project. Since 2013 this van has travelled more than 200,000 kilometres and helped restore the eyesight of thousands of Indigenous Queenslanders. The contribution that this service is making with respect to closing the gap is being put at risk by a heartless decision by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

I now want to address the ice epidemic which is affecting many and varied communities, including Indigenous communities right across Queensland. The physical, psychological and social harms of crystalline methamphetamine use is destroying individuals and families as well as the social and economic fabric of many communities.

As the state member for Moggill and as a specialist physician, I acknowledge that solutions to this public health emergency are not the exclusive domain of one side of politics and that no one single political party will have all the answers. However, the Liberal National Party did offer some positive strategies and plans for implementation at the November 2017 state election and we have recommitted to those in recent months. I will acknowledge the Palaszczuk Labor government's work to date in this area, but so much more needs to be done during the term of the 56th Queensland parliament.

There is also the other largely hidden public health epidemic related to escalating prescription opioid use in Queensland and across Australia. Whilst prescription opioid analgesic medications can have an important role in patient care in relation to either acute pain or malignancy, there is a growing prevalence of addiction or substance use disorders with regard to patients suffering with chronic non-malignant pain.

In 2016 the Australian Bureau of Statistics' causes of death data recorded the highest number of drug induced deaths in our country since the late 1990s. There were 1,801 drug induced deaths in 2016, with those deaths most commonly associated with benzodiazepines and prescription opioids such as oxycodone. More than one million opioid prescriptions are already being dispensed in Australia for osteoarthritis patients and, according to researchers, this is projected to triple to three million scripts a year by 2030.

Ongoing efforts by governments, including our state government, to address prescription opioid misuse and addiction must focus on community education, supporting health professionals—including doctors, pharmacists and allied health providers—by providing enhanced access for patients to multidisciplinary pain services as well as the implementation of a real-time prescription monitoring system in Queensland. I do acknowledge the federal coalition health minister, the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, and his announcement that a national real-time prescription monitoring system will be implemented by the end of 2018.

I also note the TGA's decision to reschedule low-dose codeine containing medications and the implementation of this which occurred on 1 February this year. What is also needed is the allocation of consistent additional funding to public Queensland Health alcohol, tobacco and other drug services to assist with the assessment and treatment of patients who have developed a dependency on prescription medicines.

Perhaps given the extensive range and breadth of community issues that now pertain to alcohol, tobacco, prescription medicines, illicit drugs as well as illicit synthetic compounds, the Palaszczuk Labor government could consider the formation of a Queensland parliamentary select committee to further assess these community issues, with a view to recommendations for an expanded whole-of-government strategy led by the Premier, via the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, which would involve multiple departments, the Queensland Mental Health Commission, relevant sector agencies, law enforcement as well as community service providers and associated organisations.

As I conclude, I would like to acknowledge and thank many people for their assistance during the state election campaign, including: Liberal National Party metro west regional chair, Leigh Warren, and her husband, Chris; my LNP state electorate council chair, Andrew Tunny, and his wife, Lisa; Moggill SEC executive members; LNP Kenmore branch chair, Greg Adermann; Fraser and Joyce Stephen; LNP Bellbowrie branch chair, Simon Ingram, and his wife, Janet; and all booth captains, booth workers, local LNP members, volunteers and scrutineers.

When I gave my first speech three years ago, I acknowledged the enormous contribution my mother, Virginia Carr Rowan, had made to my upbringing, not just as a loving mother but as a true educator and facilitator of educational development and empowerment. I know my mother would have been incredibly proud of the ongoing achievements of my eldest son, Nicholas, as well as the various successful endeavours of Charley, Angus and Lucie. I dedicate this speech on International Women's Day 2018 to my late mother given her unwavering commitment to education, to the power of ideas and to the critical importance of civics, citizenship and participatory democracy.