




Speech By
Sandy Bolton

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Record of Proceedings, 12 December 2024

VALEDICTORY

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (5.53 pm): It is my honour again to represent the crossbench regarding a year in which we saw and experienced so much—to reflect on the challenges as well as, importantly, express gratitude for what has been achieved and look forward in excitement to the year ahead.

We congratulate Premier David Crisafulli and the LNP members on forming government, welcome back all returning members from both sides and welcome our newest MPs. It has been wonderful to meet all of you and we look forward to working with you over the coming term. To those who did not return we send our very best wishes. Thank you for your service to your communities. We trust that we will see you on your new journeys.

Even though the 2024 election saw the crossbench reduced with the loss of Steve Andrew and Amy MacMahon, our diversity has not changed. For our newer members, the crossbench represents 26 per cent of the land mass of Queensland. Our electorates range from having one person every 16 square kilometres to 1,000 people every square kilometre, with Traeger about 1,000 kilometres from edge to edge and Maiwar about 10 kilometres across. It is lucky that Robbie, the member for Traeger, has a plane. We represent bush to beach, with the disparities clearly articulated by the Katter party with ongoing calls for a separate North Queensland state. Now we have to ask the question: who would end up being Premier up there? Regardless of our differences on the crossbench, commonalities remain. Of course, we share those with everyone, whether it is electricity prices, food, insurances or crime—both youth and adult—with a reduction of crime a priority and the reasons behind.

Eight crossbench bills were either introduced or debated. The Greens tackled school cost pressures, proposing to ban school fees for state schools; put forward amendments to planning rules to expand community and social housing; and addressed the climate transition. The Katter's Australian Party covered some very different topics: requiring Mount Isa Mines to get government approval to change its operations, increased crocodile control, protecting babies born as a result of termination procedures, and the ability to defend one's home through the Castle Law bill. That a bill was finally passed this year to ease the impact of the blue card system on Indigenous kinship placements was welcomed and would not have occurred without the working with children check bills over many years by the Katter party. One Nation sought greater transparency by government in awarding public-private partnerships and addressing in part the issues raised by the Coaldrake report, though the introduction of a minister for open data is a welcome addition to transparency by the new government.

From Noosa, I had private member's motions on the needed end to the lack of transparency regarding those reply-paid envelopes for postal vote applications, and an independent inquiry into our response to COVID. May our new government play Santa and deliver these, as well as the ability for all MPs to speak through the new sessional orders.

There were many moments celebrated by crossbench MPs. For Noosa, Six Mile Creek Bridge No. 7 was completed, there was funding for the detailed design of the Tewantin Bypass stages 2 and 3, there were wonderful election commitments of \$30 million for construction and, of course, our decommissioned TAFE, after nearly a decade, will have a new lease of life as a school of design, amongst many others.

In the Katter country, the Forrest Beach Telstra macro tower was completed, funding was committed for the Hinchinbrook sewage treatment plant, the first sod was turned for the Mount Isa base for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the new government continued the commitment to the CopperString powerline, which is welcomed.

For the Greens, Maiwar students are looking forward to the new school buildings promised at Indooroopilly and Toowong state schools, although more funding is needed to deliver facilities at Indro. They had successful campaigns, whether it was the Indooroopilly bikeway or the saving of the East Brisbane State School and Raymond Park from the Gabba demolition, with everyone now benefiting from the Greens' longstanding policy for almost-free public transport.

To finish, I express gratitude to our communities and all Queenslanders, to our incredible not-for-profits that are always there when needed and to our awesome frontline workers. I could go on and on, but our gratitude goes to our fabulous teachers, nurses, police officers, rangers and retail and hospitality staff. May everyone across our communities remember that these are our fellow Queensland residents and neighbours and that it is unacceptable for anyone to be disrespectful or show aggression to any of those who serve us.

To the Premier, all ministers, departmental and agency staff, as well as shadow ministers and staff: our congratulations and gratitude goes to you all. We look forward to working together for the betterment of our communities in Queensland. Thank you to the incredible parliamentary teams, from the chamber attendants, security and housekeeping to Hansard and the many others. You make our world and our work all the better. To our new Speaker Pat and deputy speakers: congratulations and, as always, we deeply appreciate the hard task that you have in reigning in the passion of MPs. I thank outgoing Speaker, Curtis Pitt, for his many years of service and our Clerk, Neil, for continuing to do an incredible job especially with the outstanding restoration of the annexe. You must admit, from our office and our rooms—everything is fantastic. I thank all of those who worked on this transition.

To all, and your families and communities, we wish you a wonderful break over Christmas. We look forward to seeing you bright and chirpy in the new year of the 58th Parliament. I will join you at the Christmas tree, which I know everyone is eager to get to. Member for Glass House, did you put a timer on me tonight? Blessings.