



Speech by

# RACHEL NOLAN

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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Hansard 1 August 2001

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.15 p.m.): A couple of months ago I doorknocked a pleasant woman in Ipswich and we got to chatting. I asked her if there were any local issues she was interested in and she said, 'Yes. It's young people. Young people these days don't want to work.' I could not quite see it myself. I told her that I was 26, which I guess was pretty young, and that I was working pretty hard as her local member. She cut in. She really agreed. She said that her kids worked really hard, too, but it was these other kind of generic young people out there who did not want to work. The member for Stafford will probably agree; it is something I hear quite a bit. It always starts with 'young people these days'.

There is a high level of unemployment among young people in Ipswich, although precise figures for the city are not available. The closest we can get are figures for the north and west Brisbane statistical division, of which Ipswich is a part. In that region youth unemployment has dropped from 25.7 per cent in January this year to 14.5 per cent at the end of June, though youth unemployment is still well above average unemployment.

On top of unemployment, the sad thing for Ipswich is that we export our young people. Many young Ipswich people, and often the smart ones who have real opportunities, leave Ipswich to study or to get a good job. It is a tough environment for Ipswich young people—probably as tough as that which a lot of earlier generations encountered. But that does not make young people these days innately lazy, stupid or disrespectful. Despite the common perception that a lot of young people commit crime, only one per cent of all young people come into contact with the courts and of those I believe it is 70 per cent that never appear again.

I think Ipswich young people are doing some great things. At Teen Care, a local indigenous organisation, projects are being undertaken whereby young people are finding out about their culture and history. The Nunukul Watamaa dance group, a group that started with some kids learning traditional dances in the backyard at Teen Care, has been selected to perform at the Goodwill Games. Youth Serving Australia, an organisation started by Hilda Des Arts, Del Foreman and others and funded by the state government, currently has a project under way whereby 10 young people will receive a grant, each of \$1,000, to run a local community project. Grants are to be announced this weekend but projects could be things as diverse as organising a community event or putting together a youth magazine.

About eight young Ipswich people, some of them kids who had hung around on the streets of town for years, have just gotten jobs at the AMH meatworks through the Altenjai project. When I talked to one of these kids recently he said that he was awfully sore because it was hard work but that he enjoyed it and he was looking forward to the pay.

Ipswich schools are working together on a Centenary of Federation project. They have put together a web site called Western Thunderer. They cooperated to put together a newsletter in the *Queensland Times*. All of this work is likely to be built on shortly with the Bendigo Bank starting its lead-on program. I want to speak in support of Ipswich young people.

Time expired.

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