



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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PROPERTY CRIME, IPSWICH

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (7.10 p.m.): Property crime is falling in Ipswich. Ordinary people in Ipswich, and I imagine throughout the state, worry about the rate of crime. As I go around and talk to my constituents, many people tell me that they worry that their houses will be broken into, that their property will be taken and that they will be left with the feeling of violation that goes with knowing that a stranger has been in their homes.

Like many Ipswich people, I have had that experience. My house was broken into just a couple of weeks ago. It gives one a shock, and it is not a pleasant thing to experience. Over the last few years, however, Ipswich has swum against the tide and seen a big fall in the rate of unlawful entries. Official police figures show that in 1997 there were 200 break-ins a month for every 100,000 people. By June this year that rate had fallen to 175 per month. Ipswich now has fewer break-ins than the state average. On top of that, this year Ipswich has seen a 58 per cent fall in reported graffiti, a 15 per cent fall in damage to property and a 29 per cent fall in car theft. The police in Ipswich are doing a good job and clearing up more crime. In the last year the number of break and enters cleared up has jumped from 12 per cent to 17 per cent and clear-ups for wilful damage to property have risen from 19 per cent to 27 per cent.

Telling people that things are getting better in an area like crime is a risky business. Nobody who has been broken into recently is going to accept that the situation is anything but terrible. Nevertheless, we have a positive picture to paint about crime in Ipswich. It points to the success of local police who have implemented proactive strategies like increasing patrols in the suburbs and the centre of town, and they are a big endorsement for the active community policing that has happened through developments like Neighbourhood Watch and the Booval police beat and shopfront. I also extend my thanks and recognition to the Police Minister, Tony McGrady, who has been to Ipswich three times in the last few months. Preventing crime is up to all of us. We are kidding ourselves if we think we can opt out of the community and expect one police officer for every 500 people to look after us.

Ipswich people should be proud of the progress we have made. Too often Ipswich people believe other people's negative stereotypes about our community. We believe the Brisbane media's biases, which say that if a bad thing happens out our way it is in Ipswich but if it is good it happened in the west of Brisbane. Ipswich is a great place to live. It has all the services of a big city but is small enough to know one's neighbours. It now has break and enter rates below the state average. That is something we should be proud of, something we should all work to maintain and something we should make sure everyone knows about.
