



Speech by

RACHEL NOLAN

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard 28 November 2001

BREMER RIVER IMPROVEMENT GROUP

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (10.00 p.m.): I wish to inform the House of a promising project currently being developed in Ipswich. Ipswich Envirocare, an excellent local environment group which I have supported for many years, has recently established the CBD river improvement group. The group aims to end the neglect of the Bremer River, which runs through the centre of town. This neglect has gone on for more than 100 years.

The Bremer River, even in its pre-white settlement state, was not exactly a pristine mountain stream. Poor flushing and varying width mean that it has always been difficult to navigate. It has had a muddy bottom and has been silty. For too long, though, the Bremer River has been used by the city of Ipswich as a sewer. From early colonial days, the development of Ipswich turned its back on the river and we pumped our waste into it. This ignorance of the river perhaps reached a peak when, with the CBD redevelopment of the mid 1980s, the new CBD built a car park and the back of Woolworths facing our river.

It is time to turn this ignorance of our river around. We have a river with beautiful banks meandering through our city and, as in Brisbane, the river could and should be an asset for all. This is the aim of the river improvement group. A number of businesses, including Oscars Cafe, Boral Hancock and Rawlings Menswear, have come together with Envirocare and me as the local member to form the nucleus of a business group which will work over time to improve our river. As a group we have not yet decided on specific goals, but options include weed management and the development of footpaths, most likely on the CBD stretch of the river.

The group acknowledges the good work which has been done, particularly by the Bremer Catchment Association, which has done good work upstream in revegetating the river, and we do not seek to replicate the work of earlier groups. This group, though, is the best chance we have ever had in Ipswich to focus recreational and business attention on our beautiful river and to salvage our river for the entire community. A healthy river would be good for the whole community and for Ipswich business, and I would encourage local businesses to get involved and to make a difference to our river through the river improvement group.
