



Speech by

RACHEL NOLAN

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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LEAD ON PROGRAM

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (7.10 p.m.): The Lead On program, which will be launched in Ipswich next month, is the most positive development for young people in Ipswich for years. Lead On will give young people a chance to move from the fringes of our community to the centre. It will give them real experience, working on real jobs. It will break down our social divides and it will be fun.

The lingo of Lead On says that it is an exercise in community capacity building. For those who do not sip latte with Mark Latham, I will try a more practical description. Lead On has been initiated by the Bendigo Bank and will receive the majority of its funding support from the Beattie Labor government. It is overseen by an adult board, with representatives from the Ipswich City Council, UQ Ipswich and the bank. I am also a member of that board. The real on-the-ground decisions for Lead On will be made by the young people themselves. The program will provide young people with a cottage in the city to use as a headquarters, along with staff and the resourcing support to initiate whatever projects they like.

These projects are entirely at the discretion of the young people involved, but they are to be real projects with a defined time line and purpose. In Bendigo, where the project has been operating since 1999, young people have set up a web design business, contributed regularly to the local paper, provided consultancy advice on the promotion of a subdivision, developed a smart card scheme for the bank and developed a local youth festival. The possibilities are endless.

As Lead On is developed we will seek support from local businesses to propose projects where they could use the assistance and skills of local young people. The businesses get the young people's expertise and enthusiasm. The young people develop links into the community, get to sit around the boardroom tables and develop real skills.

Lead On will also host periodic business dinners where the entry requirement is for business people to bring a young person. It will cross the generational and social gaps that divide our community. Participation in Lead On is entirely voluntary, and it appeals to all young people regardless of their background.

I am very proud to say the Beattie Labor government is right behind Lead On. Too often government is accused of failing to back good ideas. This project has been proposed by the Bendigo Bank and has been strongly supported by the Ministers for Housing, Youth and Families, with more than half its total cash funding coming from the state government. I particularly thank Youth Minister Matt Foley for his visit to Ipswich and enthusiastic support.

I am tremendously enthusiastic about the opportunity that Lead On provides for young people in Ipswich and for the broader community. Sadly, some people have a negative perception of young people, and some good young people leave our community. But young people with new ideas are the lifeblood and future of our society. Lead On will give young people the chance to fulfil that potential and really contribute to Ipswich.
