



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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IPSWICH WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT NETWORK DINNER

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (7.02 pm): Last Wednesday night the Ipswich Women's Development Network conducted its annual dinner. Some 160 members and supporters of the network gathered at the Ipswich International Hotel to hear the wise words of Queensland's first Supreme Court judge, the Hon. Justice Margaret White. Justice White is a gracious and accomplished woman. She spoke eloquently of the difficult journey women have taken in the law. In 1900, for instance, Mr Haynes KC lost a case in the Western Australian Supreme Court in which he argued that his daughter Edith should be permitted to be articulated to him. At the time the WA act said that 'every person' who had passed the relevant exams should be permitted to practise. The point of law on which he lost was that a woman was not considered a person. Justice White spoke of her own journey as a legal pioneer, making the point that the only trouble she had encountered in her career was from men who had not been properly brought up. How true!

The Ipswich Women's Development Network was established in 2004 and incorporated last year. It aims to enhance the status of women in Ipswich and to provide opportunities for young women in our community. It does this by promoting the achievements of local women, bringing high-profile speakers like Betty Churcher, Dame Carol Kidu, Heather Beattie and now Justice White to Ipswich and raising funds for a scholarship named in honour of Ipswich woman Heather Bonner which assists a local woman to undertake studies at the University of Queensland Ipswich campus. This dinner heard from Cheryl Perry, this year's recipient of the \$5,000 Heather Bonner Scholarship. Cheryl spoke beautifully of her journey through teaching studies as a single mother of three. Cheryl has worked as a teacher aide and tutor to Indigenous students. This week, after years of study, she has graduated and is currently fulfilling her goal of teaching Indigenous students by working as an intern at Cherbourg State School. Cheryl exemplifies the values of strong womanhood, confidence and a commitment to education which the Ipswich Women's Development Network seeks to promote.

The dinner was ably organised by committee secretary Jennifer Howard with support from Shay Ryan and Alison McGrath. As the network's founding president, I was thrilled with the quality of the event and the energy of sisterhood, mutual respect, confidence, celebration and, quite frankly, class that permeated the room. The dinner raised around \$11,000 for the continuation of the Heather Bonner Scholarship and cemented the Ipswich Women's Development Network's place in the life of our city.