




Speech by  
**Ian Berry**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

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### **MAIDEN SPEECH**

 **Mr BERRY** (Ipswich—LNP) (5.20 pm): I pledge my loyalty to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in her jubilee year and give my respects to the Jagera, Turrbal, Yuggera and Ugarapul people on whose lands Ipswich now stands. I pay my respects to Uncle Rossy and Auntie Narella and their families. Both of them gave me encouragement in my campaign. The occasion of the appointment of Queensland's first woman Speaker of this Legislative Assembly is momentous, and I congratulate the member for Maroochydore. She has served and continues to serve her electorate and this parliament with distinction.

The swing against the Labor government in Ipswich was an unprecedented 20.7 per cent. The electors voted for a positive plan and emphatically rejected the negative and baseless smear of the former government. I wish to acknowledge the Premier, Campbell Newman, for at all times remaining focused on getting Queensland back on track. To your family, Premier, especially Lisa, who remained stoic throughout: never again should the family of a public figure be subjected to such an uncivilised and unwarranted personal attack.

As history tells us a little about who we are, I am compelled to give a brief account of the proud history of Ipswich. This history tells of the spirit of its people and explains why Ipswich people are so fiercely proud of our city and its identity. In December 1826 Captain Logan, the commandant of the penal settlement at Brisbane, on landing his boat on Bremer River noticed hills of limestone. Some months later a burning kiln was erected, and thus began Ipswich's manufacturing industry of making lime from the limestone dug from the quarries by the convicts. This lime was used in the erection of stone buildings in Brisbane, namely the store buildings. Allan Cunningham camped in Ipswich on his way to discover the gap which bears his name. We remember him as the man who discovered a seam of coal on 24 February 1828. The settlement of Ipswich laid the groundwork for the four-pillar economy, for it had the coalmining, the lime making, the transportation, the farming and, by the late 1840s, the fourth pillar of tourism.

From the halls of academia to our sporting fields and in politics, Ipswich has a proud record of individual achievement that has enriched both our state and this nation. Sir Llewellyn Edwards AC, affectionately known to us all in Ipswich as Sir Llew, commenced his working life as an apprentice electrician. After injury, he studied medicine at the University of Queensland and then practised in Ipswich. Sir Llew was the only Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly to represent Ipswich. After being first elected in 1972, in 1974 he was promoted to health minister and rose up quickly to become Queensland's Treasurer and Deputy Premier. After leaving politics Sir Llew became the chair of Expo '88 and subsequently served with distinction for 16 years as chancellor of the University of Queensland until his retirement in February 2009. I stand here before you to pay tribute to his contribution to Ipswich and to Queensland.

The late Neville Bonner was a remarkable man in a turbulent time. From absolute poverty at his birth in 1922—he said he was born under a palm tree around the mouth of the Tweed River—he went on to become the first Indigenous person to sit in federal parliament, serving as a Liberal senator for Queensland from 1971 to 1983. Now a matter of public record, his contribution to the cause of furthering the rights of Indigenous people holds him as one of Ipswich's sons. These people I admire and respect.

They gave a substantial part of their lives to public service and maintained their principles, integrity, humility and, above all, their core values.

Queenslanders, like Ipswich people, have many reasons to question the previous government's performance, values and direction—the loss of Queensland's AAA credit rating, increased water charges, increased registration fees, increased regulation, a waste tax, a dysfunctional health system, abolition of the fuel subsidy, abolition of the stamp duty concession, and the list goes on. Rising costs are eroding the already slender profitability of business in Ipswich and throughout Queensland, and everyone will struggle even further when the punitive carbon tax hits us in July.

But there is one issue in particular that can be cited as the reason the previous government incurred the wrath and fury of Ipswich voters. The sale of Queensland Rail was a bullet to the heart of Ipswich and an attack on the identity of Ipswich. It was a betrayal of the workers who believed that if they worked hard and remained loyal their jobs would be secure. The former member for Ipswich, Rachel Nolan, in answer to a question from the now Speaker of the House, two weeks before the sale was announced, emphatically and without equivocation stated that Queensland Rail was not for sale. If it was not for sale then it must go down the annals of conveyancing history as the fastest sale in the west. I thank the Premier for committing to voters in this state that he will go to an election over the sale of an asset.

The devastation caused by the 2011 floods was vast, and it is seared into the memories of many Ipswich residents. There are still households and businesses in recovery mode. One example is Bob and Jihong Gartside, whose house and business were completely inundated. He suffers health problems but he is doing his best to get back on track. While Grantham and surrounding communities suffered disproportionately in terms of devastation and loss of life, Ipswich was not without its tragedies. I cannot forget the loss of young Robbie, whose life was tragically taken. To the Bromage family I extend my sympathies for their loss of a loved one. To all families who have borne and continue to bear the tragedy of the floods: we shall never forget.

I pay tribute to all the emergency services workers, the defence personnel and especially all the volunteers whose assistance and compassion in the aftermath of the flood were truly remarkable. Extraordinary circumstances bring out the best in people. I wish to make special mention of Van and Dianne Dimitrov, who spearheaded a relief effort for the residents surrounding Andrew Street, Bundamba. The Dimitrovs took the initiative in organising a localised relief effort, helping over 100 families in their area in their greatest hour of need. I thank the Premier for visiting the affected communities in Ipswich and at Andrew Street, Bundamba, to see firsthand the suffering of flood victims and the tremendous response of the volunteer community operation. I know that the Premier was truly touched by the stories of heartache and despair. This LNP government will do everything that can reasonably be done to ensure that South-East Queensland never again suffers devastation from such a major flood event as we had last year.

I wish to acknowledge Mayor Paul Pisasale. When leadership was necessary to keep the city together in the most challenging and perilous of times, Mayor Pisasale delivered. Mayor Pisasale was recently elected by an overwhelming majority, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with him and his council team in serving the people of Ipswich.

I was born in Brisbane to parents Keith and Lesley Berry, the second eldest of five children. I was raised in Sherwood and attended Sherwood State School, then Brisbane Boys' College and finally Corinda high school. I am very proud of my parents, both of whom made many sacrifices to raise five children—through the very hard times when my father had contracted tuberculosis which was obtained from his war years, to the time he broke his leg on his milk run and mum took over delivering the milk, to raising a family and putting us through private schooling. Until the latter days of his working life, my father was self-employed as a milkman in Corinda and, with little exception, made a friend of everybody he met.

I am also proud of the wartime service of my family: from the Boer War, where Sergeant RE Berry gave his life; to my grandfather, Charlie McConachy, a drover from Longreach, who served in the 2nd Light Horse Regiment and the great war; and of course to my father, who served in the Navy as a young 17-year-old on HMAS *Katoomba* serving in New Guinea. My parents always worked hard all of their lives. When it was their time to enjoy life, dad was diagnosed with cancer in 1988 and died shortly thereafter. I know my mother misses him, as do we all of his children.

On 20 July 1976, after completing my articles of clerkship with Ronald Edward Lowe and Clive Alexander Wyman, I set about earning a living as a solicitor. In 1978, I sought and obtained employment with Palmer and Williams solicitors of Ipswich. My love for Ipswich commenced at that time. After a short time with the department of main roads, I returned to Ipswich to enter into a legal partnership, and it did not take much time to convince my wife, Karen, that Ipswich was the ideal place to raise our children.

I have always been involved in the legal community. My time as president of the Ipswich and District Law Association commenced a natural progression to serving on the Queensland Law Society's many committees. In 2002 I was elected as a Law Society councillor and was ultimately elected as its deputy president in 2008, and I had the great privilege of serving as Queensland Law Society president in 2009. I enjoyed my years at the Law Society as it offered me the opportunity to tour throughout the decentralised

and diverse state of ours. I have been fortunate to meet many solicitors and discover how actively engaged and committed they are to their local communities. It was during this time that I met Jason and Deb Frecklington at Kingaroy and we had dinner together.

I have also been fortunate enough to serve as a trustee on the board of the Ipswich Girls' Grammar School—and I note that Deb is an old girl. The experience of being involved in the running of a school was both exciting and challenging. School numbers were always a concern, when on the one hand the school must sustain itself and on the other hand it must constantly update and improve its facilities.

I have truly been blessed to have voluntarily served with many organisations in Ipswich. I am currently a member of the Rotary Club of Ipswich City. I have shared that role with my wife, Karen, and I have found it rewarding to contribute to the lives of intellectually disabled people. Ipswich has a number of intellectually disabled people. On the closing of the Challinor Centre in Ipswich, the intellectually disabled clients were moved out into the community. With other passionate people in Ipswich, we created an organisation which provided assisted housing to clients. Eventually, through time, it was left to only Karen and me to run Service Assistance to Intellectually Disabled Inc. Ultimately, the housing became dated and more suitable modern accommodation was constructed. My wife has always had a passion to care for the less privileged. Just after we married, Karen fostered a six-year-old Down syndrome intellectually disabled boy, Paul, from the Basil Stafford Centre. We cared for him until his placement in more permanent residential accommodation.

Ipswich has been my family's home since 1982. My wife, Karen, and I have raised our children and have been fortunate in not only being welcomed but also making many longstanding friends. That is what makes Ipswich so liveable. Ipswich has a strong sense of community and by that I mean we help each other and we readily volunteer.

I am blessed with a wife who understands me most of the time. I have my weaknesses but she loves me anyway. She dutifully tells me when I am not listening and she finds my keys when someone has shifted them without my knowing. She was my school sweetheart and we have now enjoyed 37 years of marriage—38 this year. We are blessed with four children—Rebecca, Justin, Sarah and Hayley—and seven grandchildren, Tyler, Dalton, Ethan, Paige, Tivoli, Calum and Codie. I love you all. It was destiny for us to marry and enjoy a lasting relationship; after all we share the same birthday—I am four years older—and both of us suffer from second child syndrome. Karen is recovering from a near-death experience and she is on that long road to recovery and it is a road we both walk together.

I wish to pay tribute to those who have helped me throughout the election campaign and without whom I would not be here today. I thank the LNP Ipswich executive of Thomas McEniery, Juneau Limpus, Suzie Holmes, James Sedman, Ray Martin, Mark Smits, Kevin Rose and others. In all weather, Juneau has been the cornerstone of the Liberal National Party and now the LNP in Ipswich. Ray Martin helped me with putting up the yard signs and then sent me back out when I made the rookie error of not having the signs facing towards the oncoming traffic—very embarrassing. To my friends Bill Leather and David Love who helped me with the letterbox drop, I thank you. Bill would run 30 kilometres on a Saturday morning and then come out letterbox dropping with me. He is a true friend and I thank him very much for both his support and his friendship.

To Martin Corkey, a fellow Rotarian whose support, loyalty and friendship meant so much to me, I thank him for his support. I thank Kevin Rose, his wife and sister-in-law Macca who painted and donated a piece of her Indigenous art. That was the commencement of and probably our only fundraising. We started off with \$900. However, we did increase it a little over that by the end of the campaign.

I wish to particularly thank my daughter Hayley for her love, her enthusiasm, her undivided loyalty and her invaluable organisational skills. She put our roadshow together. She forced me out of bed. She forced me back on the road after lunch. She told me how to wave at cars. I received many valuable lessons. Hayley was a spruiker from past days and I did not realise there was an artful skill to waving at cars and waving signs.

I thank all of the volunteers and supporters, of which there are too many to name. I extend to them my sincere gratitude. Members should keep in mind that placing an LNP sign in your front yard in Ipswich was something that had not been done for a substantial number of years, so to those Ipswich residents I thank you for your support and your loyalty and for getting off the fence. The enthusiasm of the whole team was infectious and I am really proud to have been your standard bearer throughout the campaign. The efforts of everyone who helped out are sincerely appreciated.

There are special people I wish to thank. I thank the LNP Bundamba team for all of the cooperation and assistance that was rendered to me. In particular, I thank Michael Kitzelmann. He is a true friend—hardworking, loyal, unselfish and forever giving of his time. He showed me how to doorknock. I had no idea! He worked the hardest in any campaign that I have seen of any candidate. To come within a few hundred votes was extraordinary. Unfortunately for Michael, it was not meant to be this time. I pay my

respects to the former member for Ipswich, Rachel Nolan. Contrary to what happened in Queensland, she fought a hard but honourable campaign and I wish her well. Finally but most importantly, I thank the people of Ipswich for entrusting me to serve as their member of parliament. I thank the House.