




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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ADJOURNMENT

Ipswich Regional Advocacy Services

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.50 pm): I rise to speak about the reinstatement of funding to an organisation that provides vital services in my electorate. Last week it was my pleasure to attend the 2015 annual general meeting of Ipswich Regional Advocacy Services Inc., IRASI.

For 24 years, IRASI has provided essential services to the Ipswich community in the form of disability advocacy and tenancy advice. Before the election of the Newman LNP government, IRASI received funding for tenancy assistance through the Queensland government's Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service. With the majority of funding coming from interest accrued upon tenants' bonds held by the Residential Tenancies Authority, IRASI and 21 other organisations provided strong, independent advice and advocacy to tenants around Queensland.

This was a program that used the interest from tenants' own funds to provide vital assistance—often to some of our most vulnerable people—and to help prevent homelessness. In 2013 IRASI's figures indicated that 10 per cent of the 60 to 70 people assisted each week by their tenancy service would become homeless without their assistance.

In their wisdom, the LNP saw fit to axe the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service funding in what can only be described as a callous and ruthless cash grab. This decision left Queensland the only state in Australia without a government funded tenancy advice service. At the time, the former LNP member for Ipswich told the *Queensland Times* that tenants already had enough protection, and if they had issues they could just 'talk to their neighbours'.

When I attended IRASI's 2014 AGM as a candidate, I was pleased to reiterate Labor's pre-election promise to restore funding for tenancy support in Queensland. Accordingly, it was my great honour to be able to tell IRASI's 2015 AGM a few weeks ago that the Labor government has delivered on this commitment. In September, the housing minister, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, announced that the Palaszczuk government would reinstate Queensland's Statewide Tenants' Advice and Referral Service through an investment of \$26.4 million over the next four years.

Through this program, IRASI's tenant advice service has been re-funded to provide its service to the Ipswich community. I am proud to be part of a government that takes seriously its responsibilities in the areas of tenancy assistance and homelessness prevention. I am proud to be part of a government that has delivered on its commitment to reinstate vital services for the people of Ipswich and the people of Queensland.