




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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ADJOURNMENT

Queensland Women's Week

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.22 pm): I rise tonight to congratulate the Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence on the initiative to establish the inaugural Queensland Women's Week in March. I know that many of those among us are aware that International Women's Day is held on 8 March. In celebration of this, the minister took the bold step to officially introduce Queensland's Women Week—a whole week to commemorate the work and lives of women in our state. To this, I say well done.

In our community there are still those who ask why we need an International Women's Day when women have the same rights as men. Here in Australia we have come a long way in addressing the disparity that exists between men and women, but we are not completely at the point where men and women's rights are equal. With a gender pay gap of 18 per cent, only 14.2 per cent of company board chair positions being held by a female and a female CEO rate of 15.4 per cent, there is still a long way to go. Queensland Women's Week is one way to highlight all that Queensland women do to contribute to the vibrant and diverse state we have today and to encourage the community to think about the ongoing inequity which still exists.

As a member of the Zonta Club of Ipswich, I am a strong supporter of highlighting the positive impact women make in our society. It gives me great pleasure to see that this government has decided to stand up and say, 'Women of Queensland, your achievements and accomplishments have not gone unnoticed.' By acknowledging and celebrating the role women play, Queensland's Women Week emphasises how essential their impact is and reminds us just how much we as a state have gained from female participation in every facet of our community. I am proud to say that in my electorate of Ipswich we are joining this initiative by hosting our own Ipswich Queensland Women's Week. The week will be launched on 5 March. Significant female leaders from the Ipswich community as well as the minister will be in attendance to celebrate the successes of Ipswich women.

The superintendent of police in the Ipswich district is a woman. The CEO of our hospital and health service is a woman. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Southern Queensland is a woman. These women are exceptional but no more exceptional than the many thousands of women who play a vital role in ensuring my community works as well as it does. As a state, we have a responsibility to our constituents to honour and celebrate their triumphs. Queensland Women's Week is the beginning of our state's endorsement of our women, and I once again commend the Minister for Women and Youth for helping us take another step towards equality.