




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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ADJOURNMENT

Ipswich Meals on Wheels

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (1.11 am): Last weekend I was privileged to attend the 60th anniversary celebrations of Ipswich Meals on Wheels. Not surprisingly, Queensland Meals on Wheels began in the fine city of Ipswich. The original founder of Ipswich Meals on Wheels was Rhoda Cameron. After visiting South Australia in the fifties and being impressed with the work that a community group was doing in that state, Rhoda was inspired to establish her own kitchen in Ipswich. With little more than a strong will and a few close friends, Mrs Cameron began cooking meals in her kitchen and serving them to those in the community who needed them most.

As the years went on, the group began to expand, growing from the initial three recipients to hundreds. While the cost of two shillings, or 20 cents, was a little too good to last, Rhoda and her organisation continued to grow from strength to strength. This organisation now proudly services the community from their current location at the Rhoda Cameron Kitchen in South Street, with an average of 160 meals prepared daily.

I congratulate and commend Jane White, the manager of Ipswich Meals on Wheels, and her extraordinary band of around 150 volunteers. These volunteers are out there every day of the week, rain, hail or shine, servicing a community with a level of compassion and understanding we could all learn from. It came as no surprise to see how well organised the anniversary event on Saturday was and how smoothly the afternoon ran. After all, it was Jane White who managed it.

His Excellency the Governor of Queensland, Justice Paul de Jersey, and Mrs de Jersey were in attendance, as were relatives of Rhoda Cameron and officials from Queensland Meals on Wheels. Without those 150 volunteers in our community, many less fortunate would be significantly worse off. It is truly humbling to know that my constituents have such a wonderful community to fall back on and depend upon.

We know that each and every one of us would prefer to stay in our own home for as long as we possibly can, and we know that all levels of government now recognise this and invest funding and policy accordingly. I think it is safe to say that Rhoda Cameron was ahead of her time in bringing Meals on Wheels to Queensland, because 60 years ago she was doing exactly that—helping people stay independent in their own homes for as long as possible. It is said that volunteering is worth \$200 billion per annum to the Australian economy. As high as that figure is, I do not doubt it for one minute. Our volunteers are quite literally worth their weight in gold, and I thank them most sincerely for their contribution.

I have been truly privileged to share in the joy that was the 60th anniversary celebration of Ipswich Meals on Wheels, and I hope that we can continue to have this service in our community for another 60 years.