



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

---

Record of Proceedings, 2 March 2017

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **DigiCon Hackathon**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (9.44 pm): There is always something interesting happening in Ipswich and tonight I would like to share with the House a particularly exciting and unique opportunity that has arisen, thanks to local Ipswich start-up Fire Station 101, called the DigiCon Hackathon. This idea was spearheaded by the community manager at Fire Station 101, Chad Renando. DigiCon, short for digital conservation, is a concept designed to connect entrepreneurs, developers and environmentalists with the unique opportunity to create a digital solution connecting the community of Ipswich with the local environment. The hackathon will be a competition open to any individuals or groups who believe that they have the next big idea in the environmental sphere. With a grand prize of up to \$30,000 available to winners in product development funding, this could be the start of a revolution. For me, it is incredibly exciting to see technology creating practical solutions to community challenges and I am really looking forward to seeing the solutions that our local entrepreneurs and future entrepreneurs come up with.

Recently, Chad Renando returned from a Northern American innovation tour, which was a three-week intensive tour during which he visited two countries, five states and more than 50 innovation hubs. Chad was able to undertake this trip as one of the 10 members of the Startup Community Leaders' Mission to Colorado and California's Silicon Valley. Funding for the program was provided through the Palaszczuk government's \$405 million whole-of-government Advance Queensland initiative, which is delivering real results for Queenslanders. It does not take much imagination to understand how valuable that trip was and the benefits Chad's experiences will return to the Ipswich community, such as sharing with our thriving start-up sector new ideas to help support jobs and grow regional economies.

Ipswich was recently listed, for the second time, in the top seven smartest cities in the world. It is easy to see why, when we learn about initiatives such as Fire Station 101 and programs such as DigiCon. Ipswich is a city on the move. In fact, it is Queensland's fastest growing city, which means a lot of strain will be placed on our environment. It takes courage to stand up and fight for the environment, more so when the approach is something that few have attempted. The efforts that Fire Station 101 and the Ipswich City Council have put into this challenge are commendable and are representative of a shift in how we use technology. Seeing the enthusiastic acceptance of DigiCon is evidence of how beneficial programs such as Advance Queensland are. Technology will always be changing and, with it, our interactions with our environments and societies. I am proud that there are people, not just in our state and country but also in our own backyards, who, rather than running away, have embraced this and have given us something truly special.