




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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ADJOURNMENT

Ipswich, Gathering of the Clans Festival

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.09 pm): Last Saturday I had the great pleasure of attending Ipswich's annual Gathering of the Clans festival hosted by the Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band. The day showcased Scottish music and Celtic culture and attracted over 200 bagpipers and drummers who were there to compete in the Queensland Pipe Band Championships. It was a great honour to serve as acting chieftain for the day and to participate in the proceedings. I would like to thank the Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band for hosting the gathering again this year and commend them and their president, Rod Smith, on doing a fantastic job organising the event.

A large number of Ipswich people are proud to claim Scottish, Irish or Welsh ancestry and the gathering allowed them to connect with their Celtic roots. Many migrant families who have settled in Ipswich over the last 160 years have brought over with them long held cultural traditions that go back thousands of years and still live on today. The Scots who settled in Ipswich are no different.

The Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band goes back to 1909, when it was started by those wanting to keep their Scottish traditions and customs alive in their new adopted homeland. It also served as a social organisation that provided 'a helping hand' to migrant Scottish families who chose to settle in Ipswich to live. It is a testament to the Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band's dedication and passion that they have managed to keep these Scottish traditions of piping and drumming alive in Ipswich for over 100 years and are still handing down those traditions to younger generations. I wholeheartedly support the Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band in their efforts to preserve these ancient Scottish music traditions and to share this cultural legacy with the people of Ipswich through their Gathering of the Clans festival.

The band's president, Rod Smith, has a wonderful vision for the Ipswich Gathering of the Clans growing into a major Celtic festival, a premier 'destination event' that would see up to 10,000 visitors coming to Ipswich from far and wide to partake in a festival of Celtic music and culture. This would undoubtedly bring huge benefits to the Ipswich community, injecting valuable tourist dollars into our local economy and enriching Ipswich's proud cultural heritage. Rod's vision has already seen the Ipswich Gathering of the Clans grow bigger and better each year. At the gathering on Saturday, I saw thousands of people come out to support this incredible event and participate in the fun and festivities.

Ipswich is indeed very fortunate to have an organisation like the Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band. It is an organisation made up of community volunteers who are all greatly determined to see this festival grow into a major tourist drawcard for Ipswich. I strongly believe that we should get behind any community organisation in this state which works hard to add value to their community. I also want to mention the former president, Don McSween, who for many years was the president of the Ipswich Thistle Pipe Band and actually got to support Paul McCartney when he came out for his tour recently.