



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Ipswich Electorate, Walk4BrainCancer

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.27 pm): I am honoured to talk about an extraordinary young man from my electorate of Ipswich who is here tonight with his family. Keiran McLeod is no ordinary teenager. He is vice-captain of Bremer State High and, at the age of 16, he has pulled off a fantastic achievement in organising the first ever Walk4BrainCancer event held in Ipswich on 5 August. This event was attended by approximately 150 people and raised \$15,397 towards the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation which does brain cancer research, advocacy and awareness in Australia.

Kieran's own experience with brain cancer started in 2014 when he was diagnosed with a brain tumour at 12 years of age. For four years the tumour remained stable, but in the last six months of 2017 it started to grow significantly, leading Kieran to be diagnosed with high-level brain cancer. Deciding against an extremely risky surgical procedure, Kieran commenced multiple chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatments only two days after Christmas last year. The day I met with him last week he had just finished his sixth and final treatment of chemotherapy. Kieran is not only an extremely brave young man, but he has an amazingly positive attitude towards life and I commend his determination to help others who are affected by brain cancer. With the support of his family, Kieran put in an immense amount of hard work organising and promoting his Walk4BrainCancer event in Ipswich. The fact that he raised over \$15,000 is testament to his determination and his wonderfully supportive family.

Kieran has an impressive clinical understanding of his illness and he possesses a wealth of knowledge on brain cancer statistics and medical research happening in this area, including research being done at Queensland's own Brain Institute at the University of Queensland. Currently, the five-year survival rates for persons diagnosed with brain cancer sit stubbornly low at 22 per cent. While survival rates for other types of cancers have increased over the last 30 years, brain cancer survival rates over the same period have barely grown. The Cure Brain Cancer Foundation wants to push that five-year survival rate up to 50 per cent by 2023.

Brain cancer costs more per patient over their lifetime than any other cancer, putting financial strain on people on low incomes. When I mentioned to Kieran that one of the founders of Medicare, the Hon. Neal Blewett, spoke at my annual Hayden Oration event the previous night, Kieran was impressed and said, 'I don't know what we would have done without Medicare.' Kieran said that the experience of being diagnosed with brain cancer has made him feel a lot less nervous about public speaking and we can be grateful that he can use this skill along with his intellect and his positive mental attitude to persuade people to support brain cancer research and help find a cure. Kieran's life-changing diagnosis and his involvement in Walk4BrainCancer has connected him to a strong and supportive community of people similarly diagnosed with brain cancer, reassuring him that he is not alone in his experience. I am very proud of Kieran's advocacy work and his drive to raise awareness of brain cancer, and I wish him and his family well.