



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2020

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Ipswich City Council; Tully, Mr P**



**Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (1.48 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, happy birthday!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Thank you.

**Ms HOWARD:** Former Ipswich councillor Paul Tully is running for office again at Ipswich City Council. As the state MP for Ipswich and as someone who fights every day for our city, I have something to say about that. I heard rumours that Paul Tully would seek re-election and, like a lot of Ipswich residents, I recoiled in horror and disbelief at the thought. On 22 August 2018 the Minister for Local Government announced that Ipswich City Council would be dismissed. The vote in parliament was unanimous. The week before, the CCC tabled its report into Ipswich City Council after two years of investigations. The report on Operation Windage found that the ratepayers of that community 'were not well served by council members they had elected and employees whose salaries they paid'. It found evidence of 'a wide spectrum of governance and integrity failures, from inappropriate workplace interactions and consistent breaches of policy to evidence of serious criminal offences, including official corruption'.

Operation Windage identified 'significant governance failures and cultural issues that appear to have been occurring over many years and which would not have occurred in an environment in which the values of transparency, accountability and good governance were paramount'. We all know what followed. Some people were charged and convicted, but not everyone who contributed to that deeply systemic culture of poor governance, bullying, secrecy and more was charged.

The Office of the Independent Assessor ceased its investigations of councillors once the council was dismissed, as its powers ended once the councillors were sacked. In a statement last week, the OIA said that Mr Tully had misled Ipswich people by his comments at a recent candidate forum by stating he was not aware of any ongoing investigations of him. The OIA informed us that it had indeed made him very aware on several occasions that should he be elected as a councillor at any future time its investigations would recommence. Ipswich people have suffered enough. We need a fresh, new start. It is my strong view that none of the former councillors should be seeking re-election.

Mr Tully proudly states that he is the man with 39 years of experience as a councillor. He actually uses that line in his campaign material. Given what we now know, I would not be shouting that from the rooftops if I were him. It beggars belief that he has the temerity to do so. For example, Paul Tully was chair of council's planning committee. During that time the council delegations were changed at his command so that he would be privy to a draft of the council officers' report on every single development application before it was finalised. Armed with this, Tully could then deal directly with developers and council officers outside of the public scrutiny of full council meetings. No decision or recommendation could be finalised until Paul Tully had given it the nod. We know that dodgy deals were done as a result of this process, and Ipswich people are still paying the price.

Paul Tully operated his own private migration services consulting business from his council office in Goodna—more misuse of ratepayers' dollars. It comes as no surprise to me that Paul Tully has stated that divisional offices, scrapped by the interim administrator, should be reinstated. They suited him extremely well, thanks very much.

There are many damning facts about Paul Tully's performance as an Ipswich city councillor—things like his blatant misuse of discretionary funds, his establishment of the basically illegal Ipswich Motorsport Park Pty Ltd, and who could forget the Ipswich community charity fund known as the Ipswich mayor's community fund? It was originally established to help Ipswich people who had experienced natural disasters. Paul Tully is the chair of that fund, which has about \$200,000 in it, I am told. It cannot be touched by council's administration, but we really do need to know what has happened to that money.

His biggest act of arrogance stares us in the face every day in my electorate—a derelict CBD. I have been at events where Paul Tully and Paul Pisasale joked about how they came to buy the CBD. Tully has said on several occasions that the decision was made when Paul Pisasale called him at 5 am one day and said, 'I've had an idea. I think we should buy the mall,' to which Tully responded, 'Great idea. Let's do it.' Some \$121 million of ratepayers' money has been lost to that CBD through their arrogance. They saw the \$300-plus million as their own personal plaything.

Paul Tully's 39 years as a councillor is damning. He instigated shadowy and questionable development practices and decisions. He handed out council funds without probity. He demanded a quid pro quo from recipients. He routinely bullied council staff, ran a business from his council offices and squandered millions of dollars on the CBD. I would urge people in division 2 to vote for a fresh, new start on 28 March. We need it. We deserve it.