



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2020

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Ipswich Electorate, Coronavirus**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.41 pm): I rise to speak on the matter of Ipswich's response to COVID-19 and our journey on the road to recovery. The sudden shock of the coronavirus crisis has forced us all to adjust to a new reality. I know many constituents were extremely anxious, especially at the start of this pandemic, not knowing what lay ahead and not knowing when it would end. We were right to be worried though; more than 30,000 Queenslanders could have lost their lives to COVID-19 if we did nothing. Instead, we listened to the experts and succeeded in smashing the curve by following the rules and staying united through various stages of restrictions.

Over the past two months, we—those in my office—have called around 2,000 people in Ipswich, and they have each inspired me with their resilience and generosity. I commend them all on doing an impressive job sticking to the rules. I must also commend West Moreton Hospital and Health Service for the tremendous job they have done preparing our local health system for the possibility of COVID-19 outbreaks in our community. We have been extremely fortunate that West Moreton has only had a total of 38 COVID cases so far; 37 of them have fully recovered. Our team at West Moreton Health has worked hard with local key stakeholders over the past two months to make sure Ipswich is adequately prepared and well resourced for any future outbreaks.

The past two months has not been easy, with many people in Ipswich fearing they will lose their job or their small business. That is why I have welcomed the raft of stimulus measures the Palaszczuk government has delivered over the past several weeks to support Queensland jobs and boost small business and investment. While the COVID-19 restrictions have been tough on our economy, our success in smashing the curve means that we can kickstart our economic recovery sooner. For instance, just this week I welcomed the Premier's announcement of a \$400 million accelerated works package, which includes a \$10 million upgrade to the fiveways intersection in Ipswich. This will support 15 jobs during construction.

Another further investment I welcome is the \$200 million in funding for the statewide Works for Queensland package, which will support local council infrastructure projects. I am pleased that Mayor Teresa Harding and the Ipswich City Council have been working on project proposals for the Works for Queensland package and I am looking forward to working with them to get results for Ipswich.

While I am optimistic that Ipswich is resilient enough to work through this challenging time, I do have concerns about the mental wellbeing of those in Ipswich who have recently lost their jobs or have had to shut their business. It does not give me any pleasure to contemplate the hardships they are facing and the enormous amount of stress and turmoil they are experiencing.

Finally, I would also like to pay tribute to the mums and dads and carers in Ipswich who have been homeschooling their children during this period. Many have done a terrific job guiding their kids through remote learning, but I am sure many of them are looking forward to their kids returning to school

next Monday. I am proud of Ipswich and I will back Ipswich all the way during this crisis. With the Palaszczuk government investing in jobs and business at this crucial time, I am certain Ipswich will bounce back stronger than ever.