



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2021

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ipswich Electorate, Community Services**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.23 pm): I rise to voice my appreciation of St Paul's Anglican Church in Ipswich for the great work they do through their Food Ministry program. The Food Ministry was started in August 2019 by the Reverend Stephen Monsiegnur and has been serving hot meals to homeless people out of their church's kitchen every Sunday. Last Sunday I helped out at the Food Ministry and saw firsthand the amazing work they do. They put me to work straight away slicing tomatoes and veggies and washing dishes. It was an absolute honour to work alongside good local people like Annette Isager, a retired teacher who actually taught my children, and a number of other ministry volunteers who give up several hours of their time every Sunday to serve our community's most vulnerable people. I want to take this opportunity to thank them all for their generosity, energy and enthusiasm to serve others.

St Paul's Food Ministry is a vital community service at a time when there are people in the Ipswich community doing it tough—whether that be through homelessness, unemployment or ill health. Homelessness exists in many cities, and Ipswich is no exception. There are a variety of circumstances—like needing to flee domestic and family violence situations, losing a job or experiencing mental health or substance abuse issues. Losing housing or family support must be a very lonely and traumatic experience. That is why it is so encouraging to see individuals and organisations in our community providing support and relief—whether it be through housing assistance, food hampers, clothing or everyday living essentials.

Ipswich has a strong sense of community. However, like many communities across Australia, we are seeing fewer people signing up to volunteer for charities, community organisations or even P&Cs and tuckshops. The 32 people who volunteer at St Paul's Food Ministry manage to fit volunteering in with their jobs, family and study commitments. They range from teenagers to retirees, proving that you are never too young, too old or too busy to help out. St Paul's volunteers prepare and serve around 40 hot meals to homeless patrons each Sunday, and they are supported by another great organisation, Rosies food van, which provides hot and cold drinks and baked goods.

Homeless people have every right to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of how they ended up homeless, and something as simple as a hot meal can make all the difference to a person who would otherwise go without. The Food Ministry is also an opportunity for homeless patrons to connect with others and talk with volunteers in a supportive environment. Seeing that connection in that safe and secure environment was really evident in the faces of the people who came along on Sunday.

There are many other organisations in Ipswich that do great work helping people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We have organisations like IRASI, Ipswich Community Youth Service, the Domestic Violence Action Centre, Ipswich Assist, Liworaji and other churches doing invaluable work in our community. When the LNP were in government, many of these organisations had their funding cut. I want to assure them that this will not happen under a Labor government and it certainly will not happen on my watch. I will continue to help support and fight for these organisations every day.