




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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ADJOURNMENT

Ipswich Kindergarten Association

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.10 pm): On 22 October last year—yes, I have been waiting a while to make this speech—I was greatly honoured to attend the 85th anniversary of Ipswich’s oldest kindergarten, Ipswich Kindergarten Association or, as it is better known locally, Milford Street Kindy. Milford Street Kindy has been an iconic part of Ipswich since 1937. It is not only the oldest kindy in Ipswich but also the second oldest kindy in Queensland. Its beginnings in the 1930s are a remarkable story of Ipswich women who understood the immense value of kindergarten education and who used their passion and commitment to establish a kindy that would go on to educate generations of Ipswich kids.

Milford Street Kindy’s first director, Marjorie Whyte, was a graduate of the Brisbane Kindergarten Training College and purchased the rights for the kindergarten in 1936. She put together an all-female committee of ladies and mothers who would be responsible for raising funds for kindy staff and all the kindy’s running costs. In the spirit of International Women’s Day, it is really important to highlight the important work that these pioneers did. Their contribution to Milford Street Kindy’s legacy is truly remarkable, as are the numerous women and men who have either worked for the kindy or who have volunteered their time on the Ipswich Kindergarten Association’s committee over its 85-year history.

The Ipswich Kindergarten Association recently held its AGM at which it welcomed three of its five life members—Vicki Doig, Ken Millers and Rohan McPhail. The meeting was made extra special when outgoing treasurer, David Love, was surprised with his own life membership. The names I have just mentioned are not just linked to the Ipswich kindergarten; they are Ipswich people who wear many hats and that is why this kindergarten is so close to Ipswich people’s hearts. There are few people I encounter in Ipswich who do not have some sort of connection to the kindy and we can never underestimate the influence this has on the type of community we live in. It is just one of the reasons I am so proud to be the Ipswich representative in this place.

One of the life members I want to talk about tonight is Vicky Doig. Vicky has had a longstanding and deep connection with Milford Street Kindy going back to when she attended the kindy as a child in 1954. She did work experience and volunteer work at the kindy while at high school and uni and then in 1972 Vicky was appointed as a teacher where she went on to have a long and illustrious career serving as the director for around 40 years. Vicky is a valued expert in her field and she is widely recognised for her kindness, her compassion and her vision. She has taught generations of Ipswich kids and she is a much-loved and valued life member. Labor governments have a long recognised history of focusing on early childhood education and we fought hard to make sure that kids get access to cheap or free kindy and preschool. That is why this government invested a billion dollars into providing free or cheap kindy earlier this year to help increase kindy participation. We know the importance of early childhood education. We are having lots of discussions around youth justice issues and we know that early intervention is best.