




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2023

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Ipswich, Odour Issues

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (2.31 pm): Almost a quarter of a million people call Ipswich home. It is a great place. It is where I grew up and it is where much of my family still lives. However, under this government, Ipswich has been forgotten. Its lack of interest in this community literally hangs around like a bad stench. It takes it for granted. Data from 2019 shows that Ipswich takes 42 per cent of Queensland's waste—nearly half. It is a huge proportion for a region with less than five per cent of our state's population. Its concentration of landfills and industries makes it even more important for government to be on the front foot when it comes to the regulation and enforcement of waste management. Instead, we have seen operators let off the hook with delay after delay in enforcement activities from the state government. Over 25,000 complaints from locals have been made about the odour and over a thousand of those have been in the last month alone. That is 34 complaints a day. People in the area tell me that the Labor MPs for Bundamba and Ipswich have stopped listening. The stories over many years of what residents are living through daily are horrific.

Ms HOWARD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and ask the member to withdraw.

Mr O'CONNOR: I withdraw. If the member for Ipswich wants to listen, she can come to the community forum this weekend.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Order! Member for Bonney, I will ask you to again withdraw unreservedly.

Mr O'CONNOR: I withdraw. The stories are about not just the smell but the rashes and the nausea that are all being experienced by people in their own homes. Here is just one example the opposition received this week—

My husband and I built a home at Redbank Plains in 2016. Almost overnight when we moved in, we have had health issues due to the ongoing pollution from Swanbank. I have headaches, a chronic cough that is so bad it makes me vomit, sore and itchy eyes. My husband has developed the same cough (although not quite so extreme), sore eyes and headaches. We now have a toddler and are extremely worried for her health as she is showing signs of the same cough.

The minister said that she had had advocacy on this issue, but what is the outcome? More talk about inspections, monitoring, site visits but no improvement for locals. Operators will not change their behaviour if the government response has no teeth. We have seen EPO after EPO put in place with extension after extension, but operators have not shown a commitment to change their behaviours. Some of these companies are clearly factoring in these fines and their legal fees as just the cost of doing business in Ipswich. That is not the case for every waste operator. Most are doing the right thing and they are sick of getting painted with the same brush as the ones that are not.

As I mentioned before, this Sunday I will be attending the community meeting in Redbank Plains. The minister and the local MPs should be there too, and I urge them to attend. The environment minister needs to do better. The residents of this community deserve her attention. Visit the area, see it and smell it for yourself and stop the cycle of inaction.