




Speech By  
**Darren Zanow**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST**

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**MAIDEN SPEECH**

 **Mr ZANOW** (Ipswich West—LNP) (3.00 pm): I would like to welcome in the gallery the mayor of Ipswich, Teresa Harding, as well as federal member, Ross Vasta. Welcome along this afternoon. Reward for effort, making every dollar count and the importance of family—these are just some of the values that have led me to stand here today as the 11th member for the great community of Ipswich West, and what an honour it is. I would like to start by saying thank you to the good people of Ipswich West. Thank you for putting your faith and trust in me to be your voice in parliament. Thank you for backing a true Ipswich local to fight for a better future for our community. It is a privilege to be here in this chamber as your new local member. It is a responsibility I do not take lightly. Ipswich is my home. I was born and raised there and I want to see it thrive again, because for a time in the past our great community was shaping the economic future of this great state.

Ipswich is the birthplace of rail in Queensland. The first railway line built in our state was from Ipswich to Bigges Camp, now Grandchester, on the western border of the Ipswich West electorate. This was the first section of what would become the main line connecting Roma Street in Brisbane through to Ipswich and up the range to Toowoomba. Before this line was built it used to take around seven days to cart three tonnes of wool from Toowoomba to Ipswich, only then to be transferred to a paddle-steamer on the Bremer River and taken by boat to the Port of Brisbane. With rail this journey was cut down to five hours, connecting the agricultural wealth of the Darling Downs to the Port of Brisbane in a more effective and productive way. It was hard work for the people of Ipswich, but they made it possible. I find it quite ironic that a region that was so pivotal in the early success of our state has been not only left behind but also forgotten in recent times. So much so, Ipswich is truly Brisbane's poorer cousin. But I am here to change that.

I am not your typical politician and becoming a member of parliament was not something that I had ever dreamed of achieving. Before entering politics I was a farmer and a concrete and quarries businessman. After completing my schooling years at Rosewood State High School I attended the University of Queensland Gatton Campus, completing a Diploma of Horticulture. Throughout my high school and university years I helped run the family farm, as well as working part-time at Woolworths, Big W and the Sunday flea market at the Ipswich Showgrounds. It was also during this time that my dad, Viv, my brother, Brad, and I established our family business, Zanow Earthmovers, which later became Zanows' Concrete and Quarries. We started with dad's old Leyland truck and an old Michigan front-end loader digging sand and soil out of a creek on a leased property at Peak Crossing just outside of Ipswich. Interest rates were a crippling 17 per cent so to help grow the business and keep afloat Brad and I did not pay ourselves a wage for five years. Rather, we reinvested our money into the business. We shared our resources to survive.

During the 34 years of being the managing director of the Zanow businesses, we employed over 1,000 people, many of whom were Ipswich locals. We knew that by employing local people we were reinvesting in our community and helping us all grow. I have always been passionate about education, in particular educating our employees and helping them better themselves on all levels. As a member

of the Institute of Quarrying Australia and the Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia I assisted in formulating the Diploma of Surface Operations Management course. This course provides the skills and knowledge to work in management roles within the resources sector such as quarrying or open-cut mining manager. It covers a broad range of skills, including managing and implementing work health and safety systems, environment, planning, leadership and coordination. I was one of the first to complete this diploma and I am very proud to say six of the Zanow staff have since graduated.

This story is not unique. Many Queensland family run and owned businesses have foregone paying themselves a wage to get ahead. It is the price you pay to survive. That is why when Queenslanders take a gamble on their business dream, make sacrifices and work hard to make a better life for them and their families, we should reward them, not punish them. It is these family businesses that lead to economic opportunities and prosperity that no government, from whatever level or side of politics, could ever achieve. From my own lived experiences I can stand here today and say I believe government should help, not hinder, small business.

I believe that reducing red tape and allowing businesses to be free to make their own decisions—to innovate, to invest and to employ—can only be good for the economy and good for our community. I believe that minimising taxes to help businesses grow means more people can be employed and families can put food on the table. I also believe smart investment from government into strategic infrastructure is the key to allowing a region to prosper. It is sad to see that has been neglected in Ipswich West. From projects like the Amberley interchange, which has been promised for over 27 years and has claimed way too many lives, through to the Mount Crosby interchange, which was campaigned as shovel ready in 2019 but has not even started, through to the Norman Street Bridge in the centre of our city and now the failed Bremer River Bridge, it is clear that successive governments have taken the people of Ipswich West for granted for far too long. Through talking to my constituents and listening to their concerns, I know they are fed up and tired of broken promises and inaction. I ran for Ipswich West because I could no longer sit by and see my community suffer.

I have a drive and determination to get things done. Maybe that is from my country upbringing where a man's word holds more value than a contract. I will strive to get things done. My track record on delivering for my community long before entering this House is testimony to this. It is just like my involvement with the Ipswich Show Society. I have been involved with the Ipswich Show Society since I was eight. I started off stewarding in the horse section. From there I became a member of the committee, fulfilling the roles of assistant treasurer, vice president and now president. These roles have been a huge honour and it gives me immense joy to see the show come to life each year for thousands of local families. In fact, Ipswich Show is now the fifth largest show of the 129 shows throughout Queensland. Everyone in Ipswich would have a story or two about the Ipswich Show and to know I have contributed to that in a small way drives me to do more. I had the opportunity to attend 33 agricultural shows right across Australia during the 2023 show season and I delivered two speeches to show delegates from across Australia and New Zealand at both the national conference in Adelaide and our Queensland think-tank event at the Showmen's Guild of Australasia offices at Yatala. I am passionate about the show movement and the immense contribution shows make to the agricultural, horticultural, industrial and cultural aspects of our communities.

One of the biggest moments to have influenced me, the direction of the show society and the people of Ipswich in modern times was the 2011 floods. I still remember the immense devastation and loss felt by so many during that terrible time. Caught by surprise and with nowhere to go, the Ipswich Showgrounds became the makeshift emergency evacuation centre for the 2011 floods for the whole district. For 10 days over 1,600 locals took refuge in the big sheds at the back of the showgrounds whilst their homes and livelihoods lay in ruin. When I first saw the sight of mums, dads, sons, daughters and grandparents so lost but so relieved that they were safely together, it started a fire in me to do more. Through my vice-presidency role at the show society, I set out to develop a master plan for the Ipswich Showgrounds. The centrepiece and priority of this plan was to provide a suitable facility to better cater for Ipswich locals should there be a repeat event of this magnitude. Working with our committee, I approached members of all levels of government and eventually secured \$8.9 million in funding for stage 1 of the Ipswich Showgrounds renewal program. I am proud to say that stage 1 was delivered in 2020. Since the horrible days of 2011, the Ipswich Showgrounds have been used six more times as the principal emergency evacuation and refuge centre for the entire Ipswich and West Moreton region.

My involvement in standing up for flood victims does not end there. The Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry was set up to investigate the circumstances of the deadly 2011 floods. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the inquiry came out in favour of the government and all of those in charge. It seemed no-one was to blame. However, I, along with a small group of members of the local community, knew this finding did not add up. The finding was false and it did not sit well with us. Through our determination and many long hours sifting through thousands of pages of documents, we found glaring inconsistencies that we used to push for a second inquiry. Through immense media pressure,

the second flood commission of inquiry was established and I am glad to say that the findings of the second inquiry opposed the first and highlighted what we all knew: the 2011 floods were completely mismanaged.

The result of the second inquiry led to the payout of \$550 million to flood victims who were part of the class action against the government. This ensured thousands of Queensland families and victims received the compensation they rightly deserved. That has been one of my proudest achievements. It is with this drive and passion for my community that I will serve the people of Ipswich West and Queensland. I will always stand up and fight for what is right, no matter the odds stacked against me.

Running for parliament is no easy thing to do and we need an army behind us to make it happen. I want to acknowledge my opponent Wendy Bourne and previous member, Jim Madden, for their contribution to Ipswich West. I also want to pay tribute to the re-elected Ipswich City Council Mayor, Teresa Harding. I have spent many years working alongside the mayor through the Ipswich Show Society and various community groups and am excited to continue that good work now as the member for Ipswich West.

I want to thank the party and every member of the incredible state team whom I now sit beside in this chamber who helped during my campaign: the members for Bonney, Buderim, Burdekin, Burleigh, Burnett, Callide, Chatsworth, Clayfield, Condamine, Coomera, Currumbin, Everton, Glass House, Gregory, Lockyer, Maroochydore, Moggill, Mudgeeraba, Nanango, Ninderry, Oodgeroo, Southern Downs, Surfers Paradise, Theodore, Toowoomba North, Toowoomba South and Warrego. Thank you also to my federal colleagues—the member for Fadden and the member for Bonner, Senator Paul Scarr and Senator James McGrath. I also look forward to working with them to deliver for Ipswich West.

In particular, though, I want to thank the member for Scenic Rim for countless hours on the campaign trail sweating it out as well as the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Broadwater and the member for Kawana. Your guidance, determination and leadership of our team makes me truly believe that our team can lead this state into the future. I am confident to say that there is a better way for Queenslanders.

I want to say thank you to the people who believed in me. Thank you to my campaign team, my A-team: Louise, Keiran and Georgia. I would have been lost without you. Thank you for all the hours and sleepless nights you put into getting me over the line. Thank you also to my incredible volunteers who helped during this whirlwind campaign, especially on election day. I want to particularly mention Paul, Rob, Karl, Andrew, Sandy, Kelly, Gloria and Ray, and sincere apologies if I have missed anyone. Finally, and most importantly, to my family: to my mum Kay, to Kacie and to my daughter, Lola, a very special thank you. I know, Lola, one day you will take on the world. To my brother, Brad, you are my rock and my bestie and I appreciate your support.

The 2024 Ipswich West by-election will always be an important day in my life. My family and Ipswich have made me who I am today. I am a determined and resilient person who knows the meaning of hard work and I will always go in to fight for you. I was born here and my family built a successful business here. Ipswich West will not be left behind any longer because I am here to ensure that we get our fair share. I am proud to be a part of the LNP team led by the member for Broadwater, who will hold this government to account and who has the right priorities for Ipswich West and Queensland's future.

Whether you are a farmer in Calvert worried about fire ant management so you can sell your hay, or a family in North Ipswich who are sick of the youth crime crisis and just want to feel safe in their homes, or whether you live in Karalee, Barellan Point or Chuwar and want to see the Mount Crosby interchange delivered, your priorities are my priorities and every single day I will work hard for you. Thank you.