




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

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VALEDICTORY

 **Mr ZANOW** (Ipswich West—LNP) (4.58 pm): A famous quote by Charles Dickens reflects the highs and lows of life: ‘It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.’ In my case, this truly represents 2024. There are moments in life when we look back and realise that the year was a roller-coaster—a roller-coaster of soaring highs and crushing lows. The highs make you feel you can touch the sky but the lows definitely ground you. They certainly ground you, yet it is in those lows that you discover who you are and what you are capable of. Every peak you climb seems higher after surviving the valleys. That is the rhythm of life: highs and lows but always forward. Looking back on my short parliamentary career, these words could not be more fitting.

Let’s start with the lows or, should I say, low—singular. It was an emotionally debilitating time being told your time is most likely going to be cut severely short, especially when you are beginning a new stage of your life—in my case, the second stage of my life, becoming a politician post 32 years of running the family business. Nevertheless after the initial shock, as always in life, we take stock and we make a plan to move forward.

From this negative comes a number of positives. Firstly, my health condition is now well understood and has been discovered early. This is the key to managing it and potentially, with the miracle of modern medicine, even possibly curing it. Had I not put my hand up to run for the Ipswich West by-election I probably would still be putting up with the symptoms, all the while with things progressing in the wrong direction. At this point I would like to give sincere thanks to the people—hundreds of people—who have reached out to me with their kind words of encouragement, heartfelt sympathy and, in some cases, empathy. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To the people of Ipswich West, I say that I will still be around for a while yet helping our community wherever I can. Being born and bred in Ipswich, I can attest to the fact that it has a huge heart. It has true community spirit. Ipswich was to be the capital of Queensland. However, the ships got larger, but the Bremer River did not. It was then trumped by Brisbane. Might I say, in recent years—and for many more to come—Ipswich has been the epicentre of growth and is one of the most vibrant areas in Australia. Ipswich is more than just a provincial city. It is a vital component in managing the rapid growth in the immediate past and well into the future.

Ipswich has the youngest population of any place in South-East Queensland. It is currently undergoing a paradigm shift that will transform it into a modern, vibrant metropolis of more than half a million people during the next 20 years. Huge growth requires serious government investment and that is exactly what Ipswich has not been getting. Whilst Ipswich is the fastest growing city, it was ranked ninth in investment in the 2023 state government budget. Successive governments have taken Ipswich for granted. This fact is exactly why I put up my hand earlier this year to run for Ipswich West.

At this point I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Mr David Crisafulli, for pushing me in that direction. I was sick to death of seeing Ipswich miss out and in the last 12 months, despite having three ministers and an assistant minister from Ipswich, we still do not have the state government

commitment to the investment Ipswich seriously needs. It was only during the by-election when things were starting to look a bit shaky for those opposite that the current state government started promising: firstly, \$10 million for the redevelopment of the North Ipswich Reserve, which was requested many years ago. This commitment was the final hurdle to unlocking a total of \$40 million for this project—\$10 million from council and \$20 million from the federal government. I can safely say it was the pressure applied by the LNP in the Ipswich West by-election that triggered this sudden change of heart. After the previous Labor member for Ipswich West fought for many years for the Mount Crosby interchange upgrade, finally it was included in this budget.

The disappointing reaction to the fight against fire ants is astounding. They are totally out of control in Ipswich West. For far too long not enough has been done to address this serious environmental problem. Not enough has been done. I understand there is a recently devised practical plan to tackle them, but it should not have been allowed to get to this level of infestation in the first place. Areas currently severely infested with fire ants are critical to our food security. There is no doubt that government has not taken the biosecurity threat of fire ants seriously. Farmers are frustrated with the restrictions that have been placed on them within the fire ant zone. This is leading to reduced incomes for many farmers in the Ipswich West electorate causing severe financial burden. The government has dropped the ball on this issue.

Youth crime is another major problem facing our community. This is now at a point where people in my electorate are fearful for their safety. Whether they are walking down the street, shopping or relaxing in their home, the youth crime crisis just seems to be getting worse. It is clear that the watering down of the laws in 2015 has been the catalyst for the problems we face in our community today. Once again, government has failed us. However, it is time for change and Ipswich is a changing place. The median age for Ipswich residents is just 33. Young families make up half of the 80,000 households. These Australians are aspirational people who have come to Ipswich in search of an affordable new home to buy to secure their future. They want a government with hope and action.

I have met many new Ipswich and Ipswich West residents during this year whilst getting around the electorate, and the same issues are playing out. They are fearful for their safety and security. From youth crime to cost of living, they are all feeling the pressure. The same applies when I have been visiting schools in Ipswich West, visiting CWAs, churches, RSLs, shopping centres, businesses, childcare centres and many not-for-profit organisations that are doing their very best to serve their community. It is just not good enough. I take this opportunity to salute each and every person who gives their time freely to help their fellow humans. I could list 500 names of great people in the Ipswich West community who give their time and effort thanklessly to serve their community. You are the true spirit of our great community. We are eternally grateful and very proud of each and every one of you.

During my time as member for Ipswich West—in the 5½ months—we have achieved a lot. This includes: donating 40 hampers to community groups; assisting over 30 Seniors Card applications; sponsoring the petition for the upgrade of the dangerous intersection of Haigslea Amberley Road and Schultzs Road on the Warrego Highway, a petition that attracted 2,647 signatures; addressing 27 walk-in inquiries for social housing; referring 15 people to free legal service, including three suspected elder abuse victims; and assisting countless people with various issues, including electoral roll applications, public transport concerns, road network problems and assistance with go cards. We also referred countless reports regarding crime impacts on our community to the right authorities. We have given out fire ant baits including information on how to treat them, and assisted many community groups seeking assistance for grant applications and seeking volunteers and general assistance to keep them functioning for our community. We have also, in my short time, devised short-, mid-term and long-term plans for the electorate including prioritisation of the delivery of critical resources and infrastructure for the Ipswich West region—something that I know we will continue with.

Upon reflection, there has been much accomplished and I have great hope for all that lies ahead for Ipswich West. As community leaders, we must strive to unite everyone under common hope. What has been accomplished is a collective effort of the Ipswich West office that I lead. Georgia Toft, my electorate officer, has been a tower of strength and, with her local knowledge and understanding, she will make a brilliant LNP member for Ipswich West. Georgia was born and bred in Ipswich and achieved the highest of accolades during her schooling years at the West Moreton Anglican College. Georgia is a very grounded person and certainly understands the challenges facing our community. I call on each and every person in Ipswich West to support Georgia in next month's election. I know she will serve our electorate with due diligence and determination and will deliver what is urgently needed for our community. I would also like to thank my support staff: Lynne Anderson, Brenda Berry and Kami Mutzelberg. I say a huge thankyou to you. The Ipswich West office, might I say, is now a well-oiled machine, serving the good people of the Ipswich West region. Thank you for your dedication and unwavering commitment.

There are many challenges that lie ahead in Ipswich West. It is unfortunate that loss of life has occurred in our region through youth crime and under-resourced health services. I would like to acknowledge the late Vyleen White and Wayne Irving in this respect. We mourn the loss of these great people in our community. We also mourn the loss of people in the Ipswich region to suicide and traffic accidents. What I have learnt during my time in office is about the need to educate the community in all respects at all levels. I have no doubt education is the key to fixing the many problems our society faces. We need to encourage parents to give their children every opportunity to be educated by our schools and to educate their children outside of school at home.

We need to educate people to seek the right avenues for health care—in particular, mental health services. These services need to be more easily accessible. We need to educate people of the everyday dangers on our roads. We know that education will drive down crime and criminal activity. All of this is achievable with a combination of the right inputs from government and community working together to make our communities safer, healthier and happier.

I must take this opportunity to thank my LNP colleagues for their help and support during my tenure. I am extremely impressed with their skill sets, focus, commitment, passion and drive. I have never met a group of people who are so dedicated to get to a goal of 26 October. I wish each and every one of them the very best. I know they will make a great government if given the opportunity next month, if the Queensland people vote them in. In particular, I give thanks to our leader and my immediate colleagues the members for Lockyer, Callide, Nanango and Scenic Rim. I would also like to recognise my federal counterparts—the federal member for Bonner, Ross Vasta, and Senator Paul Scarr—who have helped me during my time.

To my family—to my mum, Kay; my brother, Brad; my daughter, Lola; and mum, Kacie: you are my everything and I thank you for your unwavering love and support. To my friends, thank you for the good times. May there be many more. So many of you have been there by my side for a long time.

To the Ipswich Show Society team—in particular, our senior vice-president, Paul Casos—this year's show proved to the people of Ipswich your true commitment to this important annual event. You produced the best show we have ever presented—congratulations—and you did it with a phantom president. Thanks also to the show society executive board members—all with excellent longstanding connections to our community and a firm commitment to ensuring the longevity of this great 151-year-old institution. Thanks also to my Australia-wide show family. To so many of you from agricultural shows right across Australia and the Showmen's Guild of Australasia members, thank you for your support and dedication to the show movement. I look forward to attending many more shows with you.

Most importantly, I give thanks to the great people of Ipswich West. Thank you for voting for change in the March election and for putting your faith and trust in me to lead our community. I have worked to the best of my ability to serve you and represent you in this House. There is much more work that needs to be done and I ask that you support Georgia Toft in the October election to ensure the continuity of strong representation and the rolling out of our plan for our region. There are many challenges that lay ahead and I can assure you that Georgia will not let you down.

In closing, great moments are born from great opportunity, and that is what the people of Ipswich have right here and right now. If you want change, vote for it. The LNP candidates for the four Ipswich seats are outstanding. Give them a go. It is time for change. Embrace it. I will finish where I started, with a quote or two. Babe Ruth said, 'It's hard to beat a person who never gives up,' and Arnold Schwarzenegger said, 'I'll be back.'

Honourable members: Hear, hear!