

Speech By

Wendy Bourne

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

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ADJOURNMENT

Ipswich West Electorate, Environmental Risks

Ms BOURNE (Ipswich West—ALP) (9.00 pm): I am astounded at the blatant disregard shown by this government to environmental risks in my electorate of Ipswich West. I spoke at the last sitting about the unregulated presence of hazardous waste in our community and, in the three weeks since, I have been inundated with phone calls and emails from locals backing our calls for urgent government action. These are real people, real Queenslanders—people who, like any other Queenslander, deserve a safe home, a fair go and to live life without worrying about what is in the air around them.

Unlike the minister, who has not even had the courtesy to visit communities affected by this government's neglect, I met with the locals who contacted me, as I have done many times and as is our duty as elected representatives. Those people are, of course, frustrated, but most striking of all is they are scared—scared of what is being forced into their backyards, scared to open their windows, scared to breathe in their own homes.

A constituent from Tivoli contacted me with photos of the inside of her windows and air-conditioner caked in thick black waste, unlike anything I have ever seen before. This is what is in the air around her home. This is what is going into her lungs.

People in my electorate, exacerbated by this government's unwillingness to help and this government's inability to respond to an urgent call from me to send an environmental compliance officer to visit the site, are resorting to running at-home toxin tests on the waste coating their homes. The results are higher than acceptable levels of toxic matter. We are talking about lead, nitrates and complex metals—contaminants we have known are hazardous for the better part of the last century. How in 2026 is it acceptable that families in Ipswich are exposed to matter restricted across the world for decades? These at-home tests align with what the department report into noxious industries in Ipswich has already indicated: that having these industries mere metres from homes poses serious health risks.

My community braves the risk of respiratory, neurological, gastrointestinal, skin and mental health conditions every time they step outside, every time they open their windows, every time they turn the air con on, every time they breathe the air that is around them. This is simply unacceptable and I do not know how much more plainly I can put it.

I again call on the government to act: urgently send an environmental compliance officer, review the planning decisions that place industrial developments too close to homes, strengthen environmental safeguards and, most importantly, establish a community reference group for our community to hold these industries to account. This is not my first speech on this matter. I hope it will be my last.