



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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IPSWICH FESTIVAL

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (7.17 p.m.): The Ipswich Festival, which kicked off last week, has so far been fantastic. The festival is the fastest growing in Queensland. It is part of the rebirth of culture and vitality that Ipswich is now experiencing. This year's festival will run for a week and a half. It has received significant commercial sponsorship and is providing social and cultural events for the whole community to be involved in. It is a real chance for Ipswich to promote itself to the rest of Queensland. The festival focuses on local culture and energy. It brings performers, artists and guests from both the Ipswich community and the national stage together. The Ipswich Annual Art Awards is organised by Wayne McDonnell and the local arts community began the events. The awards, which began last Thursday and are still on display, showcase almost 400 diverse works, largely from local artists. Some 500 people put on their best dress for the mayor's ball on Friday and the mall to mall bike ride on the Saturday saw 150 cyclists heading very much in the right direction as they cycled from the Brisbane mall to a city with a truly vibrant culture—Ipswich.

On Saturday the festival parade included more than 60 floats and was watched by hundreds of people in an enthusiastic crowd. Channel 7's support in televising the parade allows Ipswich to show itself off to a much broader audience. Celebrations after the parade extended into the night with music and dance continuing in Darcy Doyle Place. This Sunday the mayor's command performance is sold out. While I cannot list everything that is happening, I do want to tell members what a truly spirited festival this will be. As a regional city with a proud independent history, Ipswich has a strong sense of community and a vibrant cultural life. There are indigenous people who retain obligations to the country, there is an industrial tradition of solidarity in adversity, and there is an emerging smart economy. Within this layered community there are many artists who express a spirit of connection to Ipswich, and there are many residents who gain something from coming together and sharing in that spirit.

The Ipswich festival included the commencement of the new Ipswich markets, which opened for the first time on Saturday and which will continue each weekend. The markets have been something on the drawing board for years and, unfortunately, in the past have been rejected by some traders who feared the competition. I see it as a very positive step. The whole community is now getting behind the markets and coming to understand that drawing people and business to the centre of town will bring more people and money. Karen Oberg and others have done a huge amount of work to attract quality stall holders with food and crafts, and there is also entertainment.

It is well known that I believe Ipswich people should reclaim the city centre, and I believe these markets are a wonderful way of doing so. The festival has been well prepared by the Events Corporation, the council and others, and it is great that the community is getting involved, making the most of it and having a wonderful time.