



Speech by

# RACHEL NOLAN

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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## DRUG DIVERSION AMENDMENT BILL

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.32 p.m.): I rise to speak very briefly in support of the Drug Diversion Amendment Bill that has been brought to the House by the Attorney-General. The bill is formulated on the basis of very sound principles and they are the same principles under which the drug court in Ipswich and other places are established. The principle is simply that people who front the courts for a first time on a drug related matter should be able to be referred by the magistrate to an assessment and education program that will address the underlying reason why they committed their crime, that is, their drug problem. In order for that to happen, the person who has committed the crime must plead guilty and must consent to going onto that program.

The priority in this policy is to get these people who are committing crime, because of their drug habit, off drugs—not to lock them up with a whole bunch of criminals and to meet people who are further up the drugs supply chain. It is a principle that makes a lot of sense and it is one that has been well implemented across Queensland. Crime should certainly not be excused in the community and this bill does not in any way do that. Neither should people who opt out of genuinely contributing to the community by engaging in a lifestyle of drugs be entirely excused. The idea is to give people a real and meaningful opportunity to take a better path in life.

I am very supportive of the Attorney-General in the work that he has done in developing drug courts and other such legislation. I wholeheartedly commend the bill to the House.