



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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BREMER RIVER

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (7.13 p.m.): The Bremer River is sick. It is muddy, sometimes stagnant and there are occasional fish kills. In the recent *Healthy Waterways* report the river received an F rating for the third year in a row. This is not new, but it is something that we have to fix.

All the evidence suggests that even in its natural state before white settlement the Bremer was muddy and usually slow flowing. Complaints about the state of the Bremer are recorded from 1845, and in 1850 it was described as 'positively poisonous'. In 1979 the *Queensland Times* reported that the river was polluted by woollen mills, meatworks, gravel and coal washing, and other industry. The *Healthy Waterways* report described the Bremer as 'a degraded system characterised by high nutrient loads and turbidity and abundant bacteria'. It reports that the oxygen levels that are needed to keep the fish alive are reduced by high and unsourced levels of carbon. The river is also muddy because of clearing and grazing on the erosive soils of the upper catchment.

In recent years, through the EPA and the Ipswich City Council, some very good work has been done. Since I have been the member for Ipswich, \$6 million has been spent on the new Bundamba waste water plant which replaced the outdated and overcapacity sewerage treatment works at Tivoli which was polluting the river. There are tight controls on industry. Oil Recyclers of Australia are being prosecuted by the EPA, and the abattoirs at Dinmore and Churchill have invested millions of dollars on preventing waste water and the run-off from feed lots from flowing into the rivers. Community groups like the Merrell Street and Tiger Street groups are revegetating their local stretches of river, and Boral Hancock are leading the way for business by preventing run-off and revegetating their own stretch of the riverbank at North Ipswich.

The *Healthy Waterways* report makes it clear that there are a number of things we need to do. We need to study the river and find out where the carbon that is killing the fish is coming from. We need to identify other polluters and crack down on them. Council needs to look at stormwater run-off and consider measures like filters in stormwater systems that stop rubbish and pollutants flowing into the river. Importantly, the report recommends that we need to raise community awareness and political support for a healthy Bremer. That is why I am speaking here today.

Ipswich is turning to face the river. The state government's and council's \$6 million Riverheart project will redevelop and revegetate the banks of the CBD branch of the river. For the first time the river will be the focal point of the city and people's attitudes towards the river will inevitably change. The river has always been a priority for me. I am glad to be able to stand here and point to the many things that are going on. The river will again be one of my absolute top priorities if I am elected for a second term. Right now the river is sick, but if the community, the council and the state government continue to work together it will improve. We know what needs to be done and we can make it a lot better. That is a job that I am strongly committed to.