



Speech by

**Rachel Nolan**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

Hansard Wednesday, 1 March 2006

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## **DISABILITY ADVOCATE, IPSWICH**

**Ms NOLAN** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.06 pm): I am pleased to announce that people with disabilities in Ipswich will soon have a new voice. Their voice will come through the employment of a specialised Disability Advocate who will work out of the existing Ipswich Tenancy Advocacy Service, or ITASI, and who will be devoted 100 per cent to standing up for people with disabilities in the Ipswich community. With its historical legacy of institutions and its more modern trend of extraordinary community care, there are many people in Ipswich with disabilities. These people live throughout the community and, to varying degrees, play an active part in our community's life.

The problem for many of these people is that lack of power and sometimes an inability to communicate effectively makes it very hard for them to get their message across. The problem was identified in the community investigation *Report into abuse, assault and neglect of people with a disability*, which was recently carried out for the community based organisation Queensland Parents of People with a Disability. The QPPD report highlighted the key issue for many families of people with a disability—that is, that people with a disability find it hard to make their own voices heard and that their parents, who in many cases are ageing, are not always in a position to advocate for them.

The state government under Minister Warren Pitt clearly heard that concern and has created this disability advocacy program which provides \$600,000 in new funding for services across Queensland. Locally, it provides nearly \$67,000 per year recurrently for an Ipswich service. The new Ipswich service will form part of that broader statewide network and the Disability Advocate will be appointed shortly. That person will be an advocate for any local person with a disability who is looking for help anywhere, be it with housing, health or even education. The new service will mean that local people with a disability will have a fighter in their corner whenever they need it. The service has been auspiced by the highly reputable Ipswich Tenancy Advocacy Service but will ultimately stand alone and have its own management committee.

I am thrilled that Ipswich is among the first Queensland communities to be funded by the state government for this new service. I believe that decision reflects both the high level of need in Ipswich and the highly compassionate and proactive nature of our disability sector. The new Disability Advocate will make a meaningful difference in the lives of some of Ipswich's most vulnerable people.