



Speech By
Jim Madden

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

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MAIDEN SPEECH

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (8.00 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will begin by showing my respect and acknowledging the traditional custodians of this land on which we meet and their elders, past and present.

I would like to congratulate all of my fellow members on both sides of the chamber on their election to the 55th Parliament. I have friends on both sides of the House, and I hope that always remains so. I would also like to congratulate Peter Wellington on his election as Speaker, my leader Annastacia Palaszczuk on her election as Premier of Queensland and Lawrence Springborg on his election as Leader of the Opposition.

To stand before honourable members today as a representative of the people of Ipswich West is truly a great honour. On the one hand, it is exciting to be given this opportunity and on the other hand, it is daunting to know just how much work I have ahead of me to give the people of Ipswich West the representation they deserve. The fact that I am here today is testament to the hard work, dedication and support of countless numbers of people, colleagues and family members who have assisted me. Firstly, to my darling Nicole and our wonderful children who are in the gallery: I could say thank you a million times and it would not be enough. It did not matter if it was holding signs at the side of the road, working at mobile offices, attending meet-the-candidates evenings or working on polling day, Nicole was always beside me every step of the way. She was there to lift me up when I doubted myself and bring me straight back down to earth when that was needed—all the time making sure our children were not neglected.

To my wonderful parents, my mother Gaie and my departed father Brian, I can say without exaggeration that any success I have had in my life is due to their love, guidance and hard work. They were loving, devoted and caring parents who were always there to support me and my siblings and who gave me every opportunity in life. They, like me, were raised in the electorate of Ipswich West and educated me as to the importance of community. My mother taught me in grade 3 at St Marys Primary School at Woodend in Ipswich and remains my life mentor.

To my sister Anne Marie and my brothers Peter and Dennis, I thank you for everything you have done for me in my life and your help during the campaign. You have been my life companions, and I hope your little brother has made you proud. I am sure our departed brother Brendan and our dad are here tonight in spirit.

To my campaign team, my state electoral council, my volunteers and my local branches Somerset, North Ipswich and Rosewood, who all worked so hard to get me here, I say thank you. Nothing was too hard for them, and seeing them turn out day after day to support my campaign made it so much easier for me to keep pushing myself. In particular I would like to thank my campaign manager Madonna Oliver. She deserves as much praise as I can heap on her. With kids going back to school, sick family members and all the stresses of running a campaign at breakneck speed, Madonna barely broke a sweat, always composed and taking it all in her stride.

Young Labor played a key role in my campaign, and leading the way were Ben Fullarton, Tim Tyrell, Ben Goudie and Wyatt Cook-Revell. I also wish to thank Jake McLellan, who travelled all the way from New Zealand to help out. I would like to thank my telephone call team, led by Janet Butler and Dot Hogan. I had over 200 volunteers who assisted with my campaign, and I would like to thank them all as well as my volunteer organiser, Wayne Gaddes.

I would also like to thank Peter Chapman and his team at the *Queensland Times* newspaper, David Greenwood and his team at River 94.9 Radio, as well as the staff of the *Gatton Star* for their excellent coverage of the Ipswich West state election campaign. I would also like to thank the *Queensland Times*, the Somerset Region Business Alliance and the Mid Brisbane River Irrigators for organising meet-the-candidates evenings.

It seems that I have been involved with the Labor Party for all of my life, with my grandfather the former president of the Marburg branch of the ALP, my uncle the former president of the Rosewood branch, and my father a true believer who operated a café for many years in the old Ipswich Trades Hall.

To the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party at Peel Street, and in particular the campaign director Anthony Chisholm, on behalf of myself and the rest of my Labor colleagues seated around me here today I say that we owe you a huge debt. To bring back the Australian Labor Party from the brink of oblivion after the 2012 state election to the position we are in today is a testament to your dedication, hard work and passion.

To my union, The Services Union, particularly the Union Secretary Neil Henderson, I thank you for your unflagging support. I would also like to thank the other unions who assisted me in my campaign, including the AWU, the TWU and the meat workers union, as well as the Not for Sale group. I am also indebted to my Labor state organiser James Gunn, who kept pushing me right up until election day. I also need to thank the hardworking staff of my law practice, David Grant & Associates, who took over the day-to-day operations of the law practice to make it possible for me to focus on my campaign.

To my fellow Labor caucus members in the 55th Parliament who fought so hard for the honour and privilege of representing their community, I look forward to seeing the same level of camaraderie we displayed during the campaign continue in our work in parliament. You are a great group of people and I always look forward to catching up with you. It is fantastic to see just how many women now serve in the 55th Parliament on both sides of the chamber. I think it is great that more than half of the Labor cabinet are women, which is a proud first in our state's history. While we still have a long way to go to achieve gender equality, we can celebrate the achievements of our efforts thus far in creating a more representative parliament ready to serve the people of Queensland.

As to past Labor Ipswich West members such as Vi Jordan, Wayne Wendt and Don Livingstone, I hope to be able to continue the proud Labor tradition they have set. Just a few weeks into my time in parliament, I was a special guest at the naming of the Don Livingstone One Mile Bridge in Ipswich, which is a fitting tribute to a man who delivered so much to the people of Ipswich West. Unfortunately Don is not in the best of health, and I am sure there are many people in this chamber who will join with me in wishing him the best of good fortune.

Most importantly, I want to thank the people of Ipswich West for their trust and support. It is not enough to give them thanks for electing me as their member; I must also thank them for shaping me as the person I am. I am proud to say that I was born and raised in Woodend, an inner-city Ipswich suburb just a short distance from the southern boundary of Ipswich West and formerly part of Ipswich West. Being raised in Woodend taught me that to be truly part of the community, you have to contribute to that community. It was the sort of place where, if you went on holidays, there was always somebody happy to feed your cat or dog, mow your lawn or collect your mail.

I am a proud member of the St Mary's parish community at Ipswich, led by our parish priest Father Peter Dillon, and my faith has always provided me with my core spiritual values. I am a past student of St Mary's Primary School and St Edmund's College, both Woodend institutions, which instilled in me fairness, hard work and social justice—values which I am looking forward to putting at the core of all of my work in parliament.

Ipswich West is a diverse, progressive and dynamic electorate. In the southern part of the electorate we have Australia's largest Air Force base, Amberley RAAF base. The electorate encompasses suburbs such as Brassall, One Mile, Leichhardt and North Ipswich located near the ever-growing city of Ipswich, where small businesses, industry, retail outlets, cafes and restaurants thrive. In the east the electorate spreads over the ever-expanding suburbs of Karalee, Tivoli and Chuwar. In the west we have towns like Rosewood, Marburg and Grandchester, while in the north the

electorate stretches out to towns like Lowood and Fernvale near Wivenhoe Dam. They are all bustling little communities surrounded by farms filled with horses, cattle and crops.

The diversity of my electorate is very much reflected in my own life story. At an early age, like many members in this chamber, I devoted my life to public service. I have assisted numerous non-profit organisations in Ipswich and the Somerset region by either serving on committees or providing legal advice. Perhaps my proudest achievement is being convener of the Woodend Anzac Day service, a position I have held since I established the service in 1999.

After graduating from St Edmund's College, my first job was as a water meter reader with Moreton shire council, which later merged with the city of Ipswich to form the Ipswich City Council. I went on to study horticulture and agriculture at the Gatton campus of the University of Queensland, which was at the time called the Queensland Agricultural College. To this day I maintain an association with UQ Gatton, serving as president of the past students association and also as a member of the UQ Gatton consultative committee. As an agronomist I worked both in Australia and overseas, but it was the challenges and experiences I gained working in the rural areas of Queensland that provided me with the most satisfaction.

In 1999, for various reasons my life took a new direction and I commenced studying law before being admitted as a solicitor and eventually purchasing my own law practice at Lowood, David Grant and Associates. Before my move to state parliament I had the opportunity to serve on the Somerset Regional Council as a councillor—a position I was honoured to achieve and which taught me so much about public service. In short, over the course of my life Ipswich West has taught me countless lessons, experiences and skills. It is with great pleasure that I now look forward to putting them to good use, because Ipswich West is an electorate where action is needed urgently.

The fact that Queensland's unemployment rate is over six per cent is of concern, but the fact that the Ipswich West unemployment rate is over nine per cent is a tragedy. And the fact that the youth unemployment rate is almost 20 per cent is heartbreaking. But these unemployment statistics are in no way an indication of the attitude of the unemployed people in my electorate. I have been given the chance to attend employment expos and meet with community groups running employment services. Having spoken to jobseekers, it is apparent to me that they want to work. What is lacking is opportunity.

What Ipswich West needs, plain and simple, is more jobs. In conjunction with the good work already done by Ipswich City Council and the Somerset Regional Council, I will make sure that Ipswich West attracts new businesses with more jobs. At the same time, I will do all I can to help existing businesses remain strong into the future so that my constituents do not have to worry about waking up one morning only to find themselves out of a job. I will also be making sure that jobseekers are provided with every assistance possible to connect with employers.

But this alone will not be enough. Now more than ever, skills, training and experience are what employers are looking for. My electorate has a proud and long association with TAFE and the vocational training sector. I will do all I can to ensure that, once again, the people of my electorate have access to what was prior to 2012 a world-class TAFE system. I will work closely with TAFE South West to ensure it has adequate resources and support to make sure the unemployed in Ipswich West are competitive, multiskilled jobseekers.

In all of this, I will do my best to make sure that people who often find themselves at a disadvantage are not left behind. In particular, I will be doing my best to make sure that people living with disabilities are included in Labor's plans to lower unemployment, with programs such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work. Soon after my seat was declared I had the pleasure of opening a training workshop being run by a local community group that helps people with disabilities to achieve their full potential. It benefits us all to make sure this talent does not go unused.

The people of Ipswich West have always had to fight hard to get their fair share, but it seems that my rural constituents have had to fight the hardest. It is a sad fact that when it comes to health services, education, transport and public works, it is the rural areas of Ipswich West that have found themselves missing out. There is no better example of this than the BreastScreen mobile screening van.

The BreastScreen van, as I am sure all members are aware, provides an essential front-line service, making sure women with breast cancer, which is still the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Queensland, have it detected and treated as soon as possible. Until recently Lowood, a town of 3½ thousand people and the town where I live, was not a town the BreastScreen van visited. The impediment to the BreastScreen van coming to Lowood was the lack of a suitable site with three-phase power. As soon as I realised this was the case, and with the full support of the West

Moreton health service, which operates the BreastScreen van, as a Somerset councillor I took steps to make sure the appropriate facilities were put in place by the Somerset Regional Council so that the people of Lowood were no longer deprived of something so important. In doing so, I was fortunate to have the full support of Mayor Graeme Lehmann, Councillor Michael 'Otis' Ogg, the other Somerset councillors and the staff of the Somerset Regional Council. Not long ago the BreastScreen van visited Lowood for the first time. In the two weeks it was there, over 200 women walked through the doors, a number for the first time, with every appointment available filled.

I am not telling this story just so I can pat myself on the back for a job well done. As great as this achievement is, we still have so much left to achieve in these rural areas of Ipswich West when it comes to improving government services and infrastructure. During my time in parliament I intend to do my best to ensure the rural areas I represent are no longer made to go without.

It would be almost impossible for me to show my face in Lowood or Fernvale if I did not take this opportunity to highlight the terrible state of the Brisbane Valley Highway. I never again want to see a situation, as has happened between the Geoff Fisher Bridge at Fernvale and the Blacksoil interchange, whereby sections of a major highway are allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that the speed limit has to be reduced from 100 kilometres an hour to 80 kilometres an hour for safety reasons.

Unfortunately, the Brisbane Valley Highway is not the only road safety hazard to exist in my electorate. The intersection of Mount Crosby Road and Pine Street in North Ipswich is a transport bottleneck that has to be resolved. But I am confident that, with the assistance of the Department of Transport and Main Roads and Minister Mark Bailey, these problems can be addressed. I will continue to support the Ipswich City Council in their efforts to have the Norman Street bridge built to provide another crossing over the Bremer River, as well as in relation to the proposed Ipswich performing arts centre. I look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Paul Pisasale and Ipswich city councillors, Mayor Graeme Lehmann and the Somerset regional councillors as well as Shayne Neumann, the federal member for Blair, to realise these projects. It is great to see all three levels of government working together for the betterment of the people of Ipswich West.

What I have talked about tonight are my priorities for the immediate future that I hope to achieve. However, it does not even begin to scratch the surface of everything I hope to achieve for the people of Ipswich West during my time in parliament, be it in the areas of health, transport, policing, education, sporting facilities, infrastructure or government services. It may be naive of me to think I am going to achieve everything I hope to achieve—I am fully aware that I have ambitious goals—but I will work hard, along with my electorate staff, Ben Fullarton and Jake McLellan, who are in the gallery, to achieve these goals.

I have devoted my life to public service because I believe that we all have a duty to leave this world a better place for our children and those who come after us. There will be times when, despite my best efforts, I may fall short of the expectations of some people of Ipswich West, and I understand that. But what I can promise them is that as long as I represent them in this chamber they will have a diligent, passionate and hardworking advocate for Ipswich West. The people of Ipswich West should expect no less.