




Speech by

Dr Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

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WALK AWAY CHILL OUT PROGRAM

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (6.05 pm): I rise to congratulate Paul Stanley and the Matthew Stanley Foundation for the success of their Walk Away Chill Out program, WACO, that aims to curb youth violence. The WACO program recently received a boost through both the QAS and QPS in south-east Brisbane by these services agreeing to put the WACO stickers on their vehicles. This QAS initiative was announced at the open day of the Cleveland Local Ambulance Committee on Saturday, 7 July.

The open day was well attended by the public and by members of the emergency services community. Can I acknowledge the good work of the LAC, ably led by president Neville Coventry, who organised the event with the assistance of the QAS. I am proud to be a patron of the Cleveland LAC and enjoy attending meetings as often as I can.

The WACO program was adopted from the Walk Away Cool Down program, started in North Queensland. It offers young people an alternative to hanging around and letting a potentially dangerous situation get out of hand. WACO is being rolled out in a number of schools. It all started with the tragic death of Matthew Stanley in 2006 at age 15 from a violent incident in Redlands city. Matthew's father, Paul, established the Matthew Stanley Foundation to try to prevent such incidents of youth violence.

The WACO message of the Matthew Stanley Foundation is a very useful approach to combating youth violence. It is practical to use whether in a one-to-one conversation or in a group context. Young men especially need to be encouraged to walk away from using violence as a method of solving problems. To walk away and chill out is not always easy to do, but, as I said in my speech at the LAC open day, real men sort things out without violence. Chilling out is important, too, as sometimes acts of violence, that become crimes, take place out of anger and the heat of the moment.

Again I thank the Matthew Stanley Foundation for their tireless work to stop youth violence. There is no doubt that youth violence is at unacceptably high levels, despite the best efforts of our valiant and hardworking police officers. In Cleveland and the broader Redlands I am concerned about ongoing reports of such violence in hot spots like the Wellington Point Reserve and Dunwich on North Stradbroke Island. Adherence to the WACO message would be a big help in these areas.

I thank the Wynnum district police services and the police minister for their efforts to date in addressing the apparent escalation of violence in Dunwich. It may well be that further police resources are needed. Perhaps more officers are needed at Dunwich? Perhaps a boost to specific tactical units is required? These operational matters I will leave in the safe hands of the police to resolve, but I again thank the police minister for his interest in preventing and dealing with violent crime in my electorate.