



Speech by

Hon. KEN HAYWARD

MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR

Hansard 16 September 1998

CABOOLTURE AND DISTRICT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (9.32 p.m.): Tonight it is a pleasure to highlight to the Parliament the achievements and contribution to the Caboolture and Redcliffe region of the Caboolture and District Mental Health Service. Importantly, this service is part of the strong fabric of the Caboolture and Redcliffe area.

The service was the result of two reports. The John Holt report, which came out in the very early 1990s, ranked mental health services in Australia. That report ranked Queensland's services last and, within Queensland, the Sunshine Coast region's service received the lowest ranking. That was one of the factors leading to the formation of the Caboolture and District Mental Health Service. The second and probably more well-known report was the Burdekin report, which basically concluded that mental health services were substandard throughout Australia but particularly so in Queensland.

We have a problem in our community in that a general stigma is attached to the issue of mental health and to people who experience mental health problems. It is worth noting that it is estimated that 5% of people experience mental health problems within their lifetime. It is probably a reflection of the societal problem associated with mental health issues that 50% of people with mental health problems do not go near psychiatric services. In other words, about two and a half people out of every 100 simply do not access psychiatric services even when they are available. Of course, it is an even bigger problem when they are not available.

In relation to the context in which the service started, as I said, the main report was the Burdekin report and, as a response to the Burdekin report and what it highlighted, the Caboolture service was created. In the early 1990s, the district population was 65,000 and growing very quickly. The service started in 1994 as a demonstration project, when special funding was made available by the Commonwealth Government as part of the National Mental Health Reform Strategy. That funding has now expired and has been taken over by the State.

Because this was a new service, it has been able to take on innovative programs to improve the quality of life of people who are suffering mental health problems. It has worked strenuously within the community to address the stigma associated with mental illness within the Caboolture and Redcliffe community. The service has achieved that outcome in the context of a rapidly growing population, which is now in excess of 100,000 people. Its success can also be attributed to the great efforts of the staff of that service.

One innovative program offered by the service is the Connections Program, which aims to improve the quality of life of people suffering mental health problems and provide them with some human contact. For example, it provides people with assistance with cooking, cleaning, shopping and even meeting people. It gives people the opportunity to re-enter society. It helps people to look for work and even helps with other problems, such as dealing with landlords or Government agencies. The project aims to stop the revolving door whereby people may not need to go to hospital but end up finding themselves there because they have problems with cooking, cleaning, shopping and so on. This program keeps people out of hospital by providing services and dealing with issues that many of us take for granted.

The mental health service has received a great deal of recognition in that it has received four national awards. It was the recipient of the Australian Hospitals Community Outreach Award gold medallion in 1995. It received a silver medallion in 1996 for comprehensive area based services.

Time expired.