



Speech by

Mr T. SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE

Hansard 26 May 1999

WHELLER GARDENS, CHERMSIDE

Mr SULLIVAN (ChermSIDE—ALP) (10.17 a.m.): In this, the International Year of Older Persons, it is appropriate and timely for this House to recognise the efforts of our aged care providers who provide 24-hour, seven-day a week care, medical treatment and support for older people. Recently I had the pleasure of attending the birthday celebrations for Miss Eileen Dinning who, at 109 years, is the oldest Queensland residing in an aged care facility and possibly the oldest Queensland.

Miss Dinning lives at Wesley Mission at Wheller Gardens Settlement, ChermSIDE which is an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia. It has been providing innovative and quality aged care services at Wheller Gardens for 65 years. During this time, the mission has faithfully filled a void for many Australians who have had no real prospect of care and support in their retirement years.

Queensland is one of the fastest growing States in Australia and, in common with the rest of Australia and other developed nations, through developments in medical science our population is aging more rapidly than ever before. Wheller Gardens, incorporating John Wesley Gardens at nearby Geebung, is a safe and secure home to a supportive and close-knit community of some 570 older persons who live in independent living units, nursing homes or hostels. The residents' family, friends and the local community all play an important part in the life of Wheller Gardens.

Geoff Batkin, the general manager, and Bernard Boerma, his deputy, and their staff have worked tirelessly to maximise the quality of life for their residents by providing care and support programs which maximise each person's self-esteem, confidence and independence. They are all to be commended for their efforts. In addition, the mission is supported by a dedicated group of volunteers who freely give of their time to help care for residents. Some of these volunteers have recently been nominated for Premier's Awards for community service.

Wesley Mission, Brisbane is currently developing a 10-year strategic plan to ensure that it continues to provide quality care service to older people as we enter the new millennium. It is planning the upgrading or replacement of its existing facilities at Wheller Gardens, and work has commenced on the design of a new nursing home at Bray Park, 10 kilometres north of ChermSIDE. This new facility will provide a home for approximately 96 residents and jobs for up to 90 people, including registered nurses and medical and support staff. I would like to table the 1998 annual report of the Wesley Mission in Brisbane, which covers not just ChermSIDE but the entire city.

Decent aged care should not be considered to be a privilege. People such as Miss Dinning have a right to expect that the community will care for them in their twilight years.

Time expired.
