



Speech by

**JULIE ATTWOOD**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Hansard 17 October 2000

#### **ZOE'S PLACE**

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.25 p.m.): I am constantly heartened by the great enthusiasm and support of my community in Mount Ommaney for Zoe's Place. The Zoe Reed Little Bridge House Association was formed four years ago to raise funds for Zoe's Place, which will be situated in the heart of the Centenary suburbs. I am proud that the State Government has provided the association with the land to build Zoe's Place via a peppercorn lease arrangement on 0.8 hectares of land in parkland opposite the Mount Ommaney shopping centre.

This year Zoe Reed would have been 18 years old. It was her wish and the dream of her parents that Zoe's Place be established to provide respite for children with life limiting illnesses. Pamela Barker, President of the Zoe Reed Little Bridge House Association, has been driving this project steadily forward. Zoe's father, Nigel Reed, has participated in a number of local fundraising activities in the local Centenary community, including the now annual Oktoberfest organised by the Centenary State High School P & C. Nigel will literally walk the earth to ensure that the Zoe Reed hospice becomes a reality.

The building plans are now in the process of approval with the Brisbane City Council. The association has made a decision to put demountables on the site to allow the community to participate sooner rather than later. Pamela Barker keeps the local community informed via a regular newsletter circulated in the area. I have had many residents inquire about volunteering work, and already 12 volunteers have completed their training, with many matched with families.

I pass on my congratulations and thanks to all those involved for giving their energy and talents towards this great cause. Volunteers will be rewarded by what they will achieve for children with life limiting illnesses and their families. They will act in accordance with the philosophy of Zoe's Place, which aims to provide a better quality of life for children with life limiting illnesses, improve support for parents and carers and give attention to the needs of siblings.

Recently the Brisbane Lions Soccer Club donated \$50,000, and many other clubs and organisations have donated hundreds of thousands of dollars towards Zoe's Place. The Commonwealth Bank Staff Charity Fund provided \$54,000 to enable the association to commence the Outreach Family Support Services and employ a manager.

Zoe's Place is the first of its kind in Queensland. It is unique and complex because of its many facets. It aims to keep families together during the tough times and provides services for respite; family support; counselling, including attention to siblings; and palliative and hospice care for the total family with a child who has a life limiting illness—a child, who was once a happy, energetic, vital child like Zoe Reed; a child who often so rapidly is drained of that vitality through an illness that has the capacity to tear a family apart.

Nothing can explain the pain that is suffered by that child. Why take a life so young? What have they done that is so very wrong in their lives that they are being seemingly punished in this way? The parents are on edge and live day by day. They cannot plan for the future because they have to get through this day. Everything and everyone else can wait till later. Zoe Reed understood all this. She became all-wise in her sufferings. Nothing escaped her attention, but her life slipped away. Zoe understood the need for a break, the need to get away, the need to temporarily think of something else other than sickness, drugs, pain and the needless end of a young life. Life goes on with the approval and love of the terminally ill child. This was Zoe's wish, and her parents will ensure that the dream becomes a reality in Zoe's loving memory.

As the local member and a member of this inspirational organisation, I will continue to support it and encourage the local community to participate in the good it is trying to achieve. I wish Pamela Barker every success and look forward to the commencement of this hospice in the heart of Centenary.

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