



Speech by

Mrs J. SHELDON

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Hansard 7 August 2001

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs SHELDON (Caloundra—Lib) (11.51 a.m.): Today I would like to bring to the attention of the House Breast Cancer Awareness Week, which begins on 1 September this year. It will run for a week and be held at South Bank during the period of the Goodwill Games. The occasion will be marked with a silent walk of women and men who have been breast cancer sufferers, who have had treatment and who have responded well to that treatment; women and their families who make up the 10,000 new breast cancer cases diagnosed every year; women who are currently on treatment and their families; the families of women who have died of breast cancer; and any supporters of this very worthwhile cause and the people involved.

The walk will begin at the Ship Inn and will last about one hour. It will end at what is called the Field of Women, and I will explain what that is. It is a very important event for women and, of course, for their families; for men—and believe it or not, men get breast cancer; and for the community. It is an event that I think that we would all like to be part of and support. The Field of Women is the major annual landmark event awareness-promoting activity for the Breast Cancer Network of Australia. Its primary purpose is to raise awareness of the significance of breast cancer in the lives of members of our community and at the same time to celebrate the survivors of this disease. It is a spectacular display and it cannot but succeed in generating interest, inquiry and support from the community.

There will be 12,000 silhouettes of women approximately 80 centimetres high and planted in a field in a prominent position visible to the public—and there will be many members of the public attending the Goodwill Games. Those 12,000 silhouettes will represent the 10,000 women who will be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2001—as I mentioned, every year over 10,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer—and, sadly, the 2,500 women who will die of breast cancer in 2001. Those figures relate to Australia as a whole.

Each year the field is hosted in a different state. The inaugural field was planted in Canberra in 1998 and since then the field has been planted in Melbourne and Perth. This year the field will be located at South Bank, as I said, during the Goodwill Games. After the walk on Saturday, 1 September, a formal ceremony is planned to launch the field. The silhouettes will remain planted for a full week, providing the general public with the opportunity to see the silhouettes and for the network to provide information about breast cancer to all who will visit the spectacle and the games. In addition, for a small donation silhouettes may be sponsored in memory of those who have passed away or in support of those who have experienced breast cancer.

These silhouettes are used time after time and the messages written are shown and read. It is a very emotional experience to read the messages on these silhouettes. Sometimes they are written for people who, unfortunately, are no longer with us and for the families, partners and spouses of the women who have died.

The donations for the template go to further the work of the Breast Cancer Network. I would also like to say that this little badge, which is a little pink badge of a woman, which can be worn on the lapel, is also being sold by the Breast Cancer Network of Australia. It costs \$5. So for a small donation members can buy that little badge. I urge all members—male and female—to do so and to give it to their womenfolk and to support this very worthwhile cause.

The network is a unique organisation whose membership is made up of women who are breast cancer survivors. It is a national body and its aims include the following: to promote awareness of the

condition, to lobby for improved treatment and for research, to provide information to the community and to provide advocacy. This group of women are so switched on; they are all women who have had breast cancer and who, in their own words, have been given a new lease of life and are out there supporting others. Believe it or not, many of them have said that getting breast cancer turned their whole life around and now they have a positive outlook on life. They are now working to promote in others a positive outlook on life. They certainly deserve our support.
