



Speech by

**ELISA ROBERTS**

**MEMBER FOR GYMPIE**

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Hansard 29 April 2003

**STANDBY SUICIDE BEREAVEMENT RESPONSE SERVICE**

**Miss ELISA ROBERTS** (Gympie—ONP) (7.00 p.m.): I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House the marvellous work being carried out by the Standby Suicide Bereavement Response Service throughout the Cooloola and Sunshine Coast regions. The Cooloola and Sunshine Coast regions comprise diverse communities and include rural residents in the isolated hinterland areas and residents in the more populated coastal areas. The region's population continues to be highly transient, with a wide range of people seeking to relocate to the area.

The Standby bereavement service is a coordinated community crisis response service for the families, friends and associates of people who have committed suicide. The service was set up to address an area of need which was sadly lacking in adequate services. This wonderful service provides support and assistance to people by providing a skilled intervention team which is accessible 24 hours a day. The Standby service provides local links to social and personal support services such as counsellors, GPs, allied health workers and indigenous and multicultural services.

Some of the team have experienced the devastating effects of losing someone to suicide and are able to offer an understanding and compassionate ear to those who need it. These volunteers appreciate and understand the feelings of shock and trauma which can be associated with grief and loss and can also provide an insight into the process which sometimes includes interviews by police which can, quite understandably, be a daunting task when facing such a traumatic event.

Not only does the Standby team assist those touched personally by suicide; it has developed a community awareness program, which is a training program designed to assist other organisations, groups and supporters who wish to have a better understanding of and insight into suicide and the many and various effects it has upon a community as well as how to implement the appropriate support and coping mechanisms.

For those who have been touched by suicide, the help offered by the Standby service has been invaluable. In the words of one woman who was assisted by this organisation, 'They helped make an unbearable situation bearable.' So far the Standby organisation has received very much appreciated funding from both the local and federal governments. I urge the Health Minister to join these other tiers of government by providing financial assistance to this most exemplary and vital community organisation so that it can continue in its valuable contribution to our community.