



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Hansard 29 April 2004

#### **KURANDA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE**

**Dr LESLEY CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (10.18 a.m.): A new era is about to dawn for the Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre thanks to Housing Minister, Robert Swarten, and the work of a large number of committed volunteers for over a decade, including Father Chris Wright, Irene Colefax, Krishna Buhler and Dave Howe. The Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre, initially known as KISC, the Kuranda Information Support Centre, began in 1992 when a group of concerned local residents met in rooms under the Anglican Church in Kuranda to discuss how best to provide support for individuals in a community with few social services.

I have always been a strong supporter of KISC and the neighbourhood centre and I opened its first home—a brightly painted donated caravan. In subsequent years the service moved to the original Mareeba Shire Council branch office and then to the CWA hall in Thongon Street, where KISC became the Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre.

It was during this period in 2001 that the centre first received operational funding from the state and employed Cherry Ferrari as its inspirational and dedicated part-time coordinator. Under Cherry's stewardship and that of President Krishna Buhler the centre moved again in 2002, renting the small old timber cutters cottage next to the BP service station.

The neighbourhood centre is now preparing for its next, and hopefully last, move, this time into a home of its own at 19 Thongon Street—a three-bedroom brick house specifically purchased for them by the Department of Housing following my representations to Minister Swarten. While work needs to be carried out to prepare their new home for its role as the Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre, there will be great community celebrations when it opens later this year. I look forward to expressing my personal thanks to Minister Swarten and congratulating Cherry and the management committee on this very special occasion.

The centre now provides a wide range of community services, including the venue for monthly interagency meetings and the auspicing of the Kuranda Child Protection Service. It is anticipated that the demands for services will increase further with the new larger premises. I hope that my representations to Minister Pitt for additional operational funding for a full-time coordinator will be successful.