



Speech by

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STATE MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

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HOME ASSIST/HOME SECURE PROGRAM

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (6.15 p.m.): Six years ago exactly to this day I tabled a petition in this parliament calling on the then Minister for Public Works and Housing in the Borbidge coalition government to include the Pine Rivers shire area in the Home Assist/Home Secure Program. The Home Assist/Secure Program was introduced by the Goss Labor government in 1993 and it is still today a resounding success.

Through providing assistance and advice with minor home repairs, home modifications, security and maintenance, the project's aim to help older people and people with disabilities to continue living independently has been well met. While the roll-out during the Goss Labor government days did not reach the Pine Rivers area, it did take, however, until the election of the Beattie Labor government for the program come to come to Pine Rivers.

I am pleased to advise honourable members that just a few days ago on 12 April the Pine Rivers Home Assist/Home Secure Scheme celebrated its fifth birthday. The coordinator of the local scheme, Mick Polak, has been with the service since day one. He is ably supported by assistant coordinator, Wendy Eustace; administrator, Helen Stafford; and field officers Ron Ebert, our carpenter, and Paul Fleming, our plumber. I am delighted to announce that funding has just been approved to employ a third field officer.

The service is also ably assisted by three volunteers: a soldier, a teacher and an office worker—all retired. My thanks on behalf of the people of Pine Rivers go to these dedicated employees and volunteers whose tireless work makes a huge difference in our community. I must also take this opportunity to thank the Pine Rivers Shire Council which auspiced the program.

The Pine Rivers Home Assist/Home Secure Scheme has a short but vibrant history. When the service opened on 12 April 1999 it was predicted that it would have 2,000 clients within five years. This month they have had their 3,000th client. To cope with this rapid growth and the increased demand, the service is looking to relocate from its Dayboro Road, Petrie home but has not yet decided on new premises. Many Kurwongbah constituents have contacted me regarding the excellent service provided by Mick Polak and his team, including one lady with a disability who lives alone. She wrote me a letter as she wanted to make me aware of the exemplary service that Home Assist has provided to her over the last year and a half. She says that in July last year she found herself living alone and was concerned that her disabilities would cause her major problems and expenses. The staff at Home Assist provided her with invaluable advice and assistance that gives her a sense of control over her living arrangements. These sentiments are shared by many in the community who have been assisted by the service.