



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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HEART FOUNDATION BREAKFAST; FRIENDS OF FEDERATION WALK

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (9.06 pm): This morning I also attended the parliamentary special interest group function, along with the member for Algerie and other members of the House, on cardiovascular health disease coordinated by the National Heart Foundation of Australia. I wish the honourable member for Algerie's mother all the best as she recuperates. This morning's function was the inaugural meeting, with the meetings now to occur about four times a year. The meetings will act as a forum for those in attendance to receive updates on the latest in cardiovascular research and health information in an informal setting.

Congratulations to the Heart Foundation and Chief Executive Officer Cameron Prout for a wonderfully well-organised and informative morning. And congratulations, too, for a fantastic initiative. Cardiovascular disease, as the member for Algerie mentioned, affects two in three Australian families and remains Australia's largest killer, accounting for 37 per cent of all deaths in our country. Cardiovascular disease costs the government and the community. Direct health system costs of the disease amounted to more than \$7.6 billion in 2004, equating to 11 per cent of total health spending and greater than any other disease group.

The inaugural topic from this morning's breakfast was 'Making healthy choices the easy choices'. The overall theme was simple. Much of the burden of the disease is avoidable. High cholesterol levels, physical inactivity, obesity and diabetes all contribute to the prevalence of cardiovascular disease in Australia. We need to eat better, stop smoking and walk. Walking is what we need to do.

Along with Cameron Prout, we heard from Professor Neville Owen from the Cancer Prevention Research Centre of the University of Queensland. Both gentlemen told the meeting how environments can shape the health choices of the community and how, indeed, healthy choices can be made the easy choice. Governments, both local and state, developers and volunteers can ensure our communities are walker friendly by giving some thought to their neighbours. On the Gold Coast, in my electorate, the Friends of Federation Walk group do voluntary planting on the eastern side of The Spit to ensure the area is maintained and a usable area for families and walkers alike. The friends were promised \$100,000 a year from the state government to assist them with their volunteer work, funds that were not conditional upon the cruise ship terminal going through.

To date the group has received a pittance from the government. These are the sorts of groups, volunteers looking out for their neighbours, that the Heart Foundation's Walk for Life program is dependant on and that deserve the support of local and state governments. The benefit to the quality of life of Queenslanders is undeniable and the effects on the Health budget's bottom line could also improve. That is something this Beattie Labor government cannot ignore.