



Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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CALOUNDRA, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (10.08 pm): As I said yesterday in this House, on 5 May I was at a domestic violence forum in Caloundra which, in part, highlighted the desperate need in the city for services to deal with the outcomes of domestic violence. The Caloundra Community Centre provides counselling as it can but finds itself hamstrung by financial resources. There are no other resources available for women and children or other persons who have been the victim of domestic violence to go to and certainly no other counselling facilities open to the public on a free consultation basis in Caloundra.

We have all heard of the devastating consequences of domestic violence. We all know of people including children who have seen or been the subject of domestic violence. Caloundra now needs to move to the next level. Caloundra now needs to put in place services to deal with domestic violence on a local level. Many of the people who need assistance in domestic violence matters do not have the financial capacity to travel from Caloundra to Maroochydore—the centre across the Sunshine Coast—to obtain treatment, counselling and advice. The serious nature of domestic violence and the implications warrant money being put into Caloundra to cope with the ever-increasing number of people who need such services.

I am not denigrating the people or services in Maroochydore. In fact, they perform exceptional work, but there is now clear evidence for a new community centre to be either purchased or established in Caloundra and for that centre to be large enough to cater for many more needs than the current centre does. The new centre will be able to provide many of the services to deal with domestic violence.

Carolyn Nolan of the Caloundra Community Centre and her staff do a wonderful job and they are to be congratulated on what they have achieved. However, the time has now come for the community centre as it is to be abandoned and a modern and larger facility established to provide greater access and services to the community. I understand that this will not be a cheap exercise, but when you consider the long-term impact of domestic violence, not just on the individuals concerned but also upon our society as a whole, the cost is only a drop in the ocean.

It is not difficult to comprehend the importance of children being well adjusted and safe from domestic violence. The benefits are obvious, not just for these children but also for society. Domestic violence itself is not going to be solved by attacking the end of the equation. Resources and time need to be poured into education so that the obvious end result does not eventuate.

This is probably the biggest challenge and one that has largely eluded us to date. There is a very clear need for services to be placed into Caloundra as opposed to simply relying on Maroochydore if on no other basis than the population increase in Caloundra being the guidepost. There is a real need to ensure that Caloundra is provided with facilities and resources to deal with this ever-growing problem.

As I said yesterday afternoon, there is also a need now to consider whether or not a family domestic violence court set up specifically to deal with those issues in a therapeutic or other nature needs to be established across Queensland. There is now a need in this state for us to turn our minds to that particular object and establish whether it can function in this jurisdiction.