



Speech by

# Mandy Johnstone

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Hansard Wednesday, 28 October 2009

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## TOWNSVILLE WEST COMMUNITY CENTRE; TOTTS

**Ms JOHNSTONE** (Townsville—ALP) (10.28 pm): On Thursday, 15 October I was pleased and privileged to officially launch the Townsville West Community Centre's new Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, A New Day. Attending on the day was my great friend the member for Mundingburra; the CEO of the North Queensland Cowboys, Peter Parr; and players from the Townsville Fire basketball team and the North Queensland Fury football team. It was fabulous to see so many old friends there to support this important community project. Police liaison officers Linda Janetski and Anthony Stout, members of the management committee, including Graham Smalley and Greg Harris, and representatives from Townsville's Youth Council were present.

I commend the work of Townsville West Community Centre's manager, Tara Harding, and A New Day's program coordinator, Rebecca Askey-Doran, for putting together a quality program that is going to assist the people of Townsville West in obtaining and sustaining work. Participants who join in this project want to join the workforce or participate in the community, and the Townsville West Community Centre has organised a variety of accredited and non-accredited training to help them.

This project will keep unemployed people motivated, self-confident and engaged in their search for work, and it will give volunteers the opportunity to gain accredited certificate courses which will enable them to maintain their volunteering positions under the new food-handling and alcohol service regulations. Participants will be able to join A New Day's job club, externally enrol in TAFE computer courses, and attend weekly motivational and interest group workshops to assist them to build their networks, learn from each other and share their successes.

During 2009-10 the Queensland government will invest \$101 million in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative to give an estimated 21,000 long-term unemployed and underemployed people job related assistance and skills training to maximise labour force participation and increase Queensland's prosperity.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the work of TOTTS in Townsville. TOTTS provides an essential transport service to seniors and people with a disability in Townsville. The services provided by TOTTS are simply staggering. For example, from 1 March 2008 to 28 February 2009 TOTTS undertook 16,905 trips in its fleet of eight vehicles. The fleet consists of one 24-seater bus, one 14-seater bus, one car and five station wagons. Those 16,905 passenger trips are the equivalent of 86,187 kilometres travelled over a 12-month period, purely for the purpose of creating inclusive communities for older people and people with disabilities in Townsville.

Those figures speak for themselves. I was pleased to see the Minister for Community Services, Minister Struthers, in Townsville last Friday to hand over a cheque for \$450,000 which will secure TOTTS's future. Congratulations to Garth Harrigan and his entire team on a job well done.