



Speech by

Hon. Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Thursday, 8 October 2009

ALBERT ELECTORATE, SENIORS MORNING TEA

Hon. MM KEECH (Albert—ALP) (10.23 pm): Last month I had the pleasure of hosting a very special morning tea for the seniors of the Pimpama and Willow Vale areas of the Albert electorate. My special guests were Julia Gilbert, the Principal Education and Advice Officer for the Office of the Adult Guardian, and Steve Forster, the Regional Manager at the Southport office of the Public Trustee of Queensland.

Julia and Steve presented an excellent information session on two vital state government services of which it seems a lot of people are unaware. The Office of the Adult Guardian was established to protect the rights of people who are unable to make important decisions for themselves. Whether it be from a serious accident or through a debilitating illness such as dementia, when someone finds themselves in a position where they are now unable to perform basic, everyday tasks, it can be frightening and distressing not just for them but for their families as well. In cases such as this, the office can be appointed to act as the guardian of the person including times when the incapacitated person has no immediate family, where there is abuse involved or when there is a serious conflict within the family which may be detrimental to the person's wellbeing.

One of the most important services the Adult Guardian provides is the advance health directive. This document will ensure that, in the event of an accident or incapacitation, a person's wishes regarding their preferred health treatment are always followed. The Adult Guardian works hand in hand with the Public Trustee of Queensland. I say thanks to Steve Forster, who gave my guests a better understanding of the important services that the office provides.

As we get older, many of us will need assistance in attending to our financial and legal matters. The Public Trustee can see to the payment of bills, financial statements and real estate management. It can also assist in the appointment of an enduring power of attorney, allowing an appointed person power to make financial, personal and health related decisions if a person becomes incapacitated.

During the morning tea we were spoilt by the award-winning catering of Mrs Judy Hendrikx. I also had the great pleasure to acknowledge a very special Albert volunteer by presenting Mr Rodney Phillips with a certificate acknowledging his 25 years of service as a justice of the peace. In addressing the guests, Mr Phillips spoke about his passion for volunteering and the rewards of being a justice of the peace. He called on other retirees to spend just a few hours a week helping others in our community, an important message which I strongly endorse.