



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 25 February 2010

WATER SAFETY

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (7.25 pm): Each year people of all ages around Australia lose their lives through drowning. It devastates the community and deeply impacts the family involved, leaving permanent heartache. Closer to home we witnessed the tragic loss of a 13-year-old Somali boy on Brisbane's south side who died in rain-swollen Bulimba Creek last December. His death had a profound effect on his family and the Somali community.

There is no room for complacency when it comes to safety around water. Drowning is silent and can happen in an instant. In response to this tragedy, I organised a water safety awareness session in the electorate of Greenslopes in collaboration with the Somali Development Organisation and Surf Life Saving Queensland to discuss all aspects of water safety. There are many residents in the Greenslopes electorate who originally came to our country from Somalia, and I was very happy to organise this session for them.

Water safety awareness is important for everyone, so it is important that we extend some extra assistance to newcomers to our state and nation who are not familiar with local conditions and the risks posed by water. The water safety awareness session was held on Saturday, 13 February 2010 at the Eastern Suburbs Junior Rugby League Football Club at Holland Park. The commitment of all of us in Queensland is to ensure such tragedies never happen again, but it is also critical for all south siders to learn about the hidden dangers of fast-flowing creeks, particularly during the wet season, as well as safety at the beach.

Living in the Sunshine State we are very fortunate in having access to stunning beaches, but beaches also have the potential to be deadly. The hidden dangers of rips can cost lives. The seminar focused on water safety fundamentals such as learning to swim and survival skills when caught in a life-threatening situation. It also focused on the importance of parental supervision in the water and the need to be close at hand should assistance be necessary.

I want to thank the representatives of the Somali Development Organisation who helped me organise this session together with the representatives of Surf Life Saving Queensland who conducted such an excellent program. I want to thank all members of the local Somali community who attended. The session was very well attended. There were at least 40 people in attendance. It was a tribute to the parents of many children in the local community that they attended, were so attentive and paid such attention to what was occurring. They took home with them much of the literature produced and presented at the seminar by Surf Life Saving Queensland. I want to thank all participants for this important water safety program that will assist residents, particularly new residents, in my electorate.