



Speech by

**Mark Ryan**

**MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD**

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## **YOUNG CARERS**



**Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (3.24 pm): I would like to share with the House an extract from a case study from a research report published by the Australian Catholic University in April 2006. It states—

Michael is 16 years old. When Michael was 13, he was in a car accident with his mother Jane. Both Michael and Jane were rushed to intensive care where they stayed for some months—during which time Michael's father moved to another city to start 'a new life'.

Michael sustained some internal injuries but recovered over time. Jane, however, had considerable damage to her brain—leaving her partially blind and unable to walk. After leaving hospital, Michael (her 13 year old son) became her primary carer and helped her around the home or, as Michael puts it, 'became her legs and her eyes'. Though challenged physically, Michael still sees his mother as providing for him 'like all Mums do—she still makes sure I'm okay, tells me to do my homework and clean my pigsty room'.

Sadly this is just one of a number of similar stories for young people in our communities. In fact, some research suggests that there are almost 400,000 young Australians who are carers.

Recently I met with Courtney Banks. Courtney was one of the school captains at Morayfield State High School last year. She is now studying for a bachelor degree in marine science. She is an exceptional young woman and she has a big future ahead of her. Courtney through her schooling years was the carer for her disabled sister. Courtney is a young carer. Courtney spoke with me about her experiences as a young carer and about her love for her sister. Courtney also spoke with me about the need to raise awareness of the challenges facing young carers. One way to do that is through our schools by identifying who is a young carer and providing extra support to them. By identifying who are young carers we can provide better support for them.

*(Time expired)*