




Speech by
Desley Scott

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (12.52 am): Ten years ago a small group of people responded to a need in their community to support 30 local young people who needed specialist foster care. This year, 10 years later, that small group has grown into one of our largest support agencies, Life Without Barriers. It was my pleasure to attend their recent celebration with their chief executive, Claire Robbs; all four state managers, including present state manager, Scott Bray, and other managers and heads of programs; Barry Salmon from the commission for children; and over 130 workers, guests and, of course, most importantly, some of their clients. We attend many celebrations as MPs, but some are full of heartfelt stories and speeches which attest to the special care and love that pervades their services and this was one such occasion.

LWB supports children and their foster carers, some children with very high needs, people with disabilities, Home and Community Care, Indigenous services and provides support to unaccompanied minors. Shannon Ruska set the scene with a very moving welcome to country and, following a number of official speeches, we were then given a very personal insight into the life of many of LWB's clients and carers. I wish to read to this House the words of Donna, a former corporate manager, now devoted to the full-time care of her young grandson, aged 6, with very complex needs. She says—

My grandson was having 30 to 50 tonic clonic seizures a day, 10 seizure meds several times a day, doctors kept counselling me that he could die, he almost did countless times, and I was scared. We spent the majority of time in hospital keeping him alive.

When things were at their worst, LWB came into our life. That was October 2008. From that day on I felt that I had the support, care and the respect to enable me to assist myself and my grandson to overcome or at the very least cope with the day to day challenges that we face.

She is a very, very brave and truly remarkable grandmother.

There was also an Aboriginal elder, Uncle Barry Mann, who took two young men to Central Australia to learn and experience their culture. He continues to mentor them. We heard from a wonderful foster carer, Jude, and were very moved by an original song from Elizabeth, a very young woman in care, with an angelic voice. Then there was Shaun, who accesses disability support and has been awarded for his participation in soccer at the Special Olympics. It was a delight for me to listen to Jawad Askari, who shared his story of arriving from Afghanistan in 1999, and now he, too, is working there, mentoring another young man from Afghanistan who is now studying at Woodridge High.

(Time expired)