




Speech by
Ian Kaye

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 12 July 2012

GRANDFRIENDS

 **Mr KAYE** (Greenslopes—LNP) (5.53 pm): Tonight I rise to discuss a wonderful group in my electorate, which also operates across Queensland—Grandfriends. Grandfriends is operated by the Older People Speak Out advocacy group. Older People Speak Out is an apolitical volunteer group that represents its members on older people's issues. It fights on behalf of seniors to ensure their voices are heard. But back to Grandfriends.

A couple of weeks ago I was lucky enough to be invited to a morning tea by their spokeswoman, Ms Blanche O'Connor. These valued older people in our community volunteer at our schools and pass on their skills to our primary school children. Those skills can be as varied as reading, spelling, multiplication tables, writing stories, knitting, sewing, crochet, embroidery, chess and other games, craft work, dancing and debating. The classes are usually held in the lunch playtime and at the discretion of the school. The program is primarily about young and old communicating, enjoying contact with each other and having fun.

Being a volunteer group, Grandfriends relies on community grants. In June I was lucky enough to present them with a grant from the Southside Sport and Community Club's Gambling Community Benefit Fund to help continue their valuable work. Groups like Grandfriends provide opportunities for our old and young to interact. As we know, some children do not have contact with grandparent figures due to death, illness, distance or family breakdown. It is terrific to see such diverse age groups given a safe, convenient option where they can help each other, with school children learning new skills and older people given the ability to still contribute in a meaningful way. I know the Grandfriends volunteers I met love working with the schools in my electorate and the children feel the same way.

I have listened to other members in this place talk about how vital volunteering is in our community and how it is often unrecognised just how much volunteering contributes to our communities. In recent years various research facilities have tried to put a price on volunteering and the estimate runs into the multi-billions of dollars. People get involved in volunteer groups for multiple reasons: companionship, exercise, advocacy, enjoyment. However, I think it boils down to what kind of community you want to live in. Whether you help in your child's tuckshop, read to the blind, drive meals to people, plant trees along the creek or, like Grandfriends, give up time to teach our children skills we may not have time to teach them, as well as the myriad other ways in which people help out in our community, your contribution is invaluable. I look forward to working with those amazing groups in my electorate and giving them the recognition they deserve.