




Speech by
Ian Walker

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Hansard Thursday, 7 June 2012

HOPE FOUNDATION

 **Mr WALKER** (Mansfield—LNP) (3.11 pm): It was interesting to hear the member for Sandgate speak about volunteerism. That that subject came up so often in maiden speeches, particularly from members on this side of the House, shows the value of our community groups—the lifeblood, the heart and the soul of our individual electorates. I want to take the opportunity today to share with the House the achievements of one of the many remarkable community groups that operate within my electorate of Mansfield, and I speak of the Hope Foundation, which is based in Mount Gravatt but operates throughout greater Brisbane, providing much needed help and support to women trying to escape from a life of prostitution or drug and alcohol addiction. Many of these women, because of their circumstances, are also homeless—and I interpose here that it was good to hear from the minister in her statement to the House this morning the steps being taken by the government to continue to increase support for homeless people within our community. The Hope Foundation itself does great on-the-ground work and helps between 20 and 40 women each week. The Hope Foundation also runs a number of other educational, outreach and support programs which are aimed at raising awareness of the problems faced by vulnerable women and ensuring that those who require it have access to practical and emotional support. There are no other organisations in Brisbane that provide the same assistance to women within this target group.

A remarkable constituent of mine, Ms Bronwen Healy, founded this organisation in 2007 after her own successful transformation from a life of addiction and prostitution in 1999. Her commitment to growing the Hope Foundation is extraordinary. She leads on the ground and also has a significant role speaking publicly about the foundation's work. Her Christian faith is her key motivation but, needless to say, all are welcomed within the doors of the foundation's rooms. Bronwen was a finalist in the Queensland Telstra Business Women's Awards in 2010.

I visited the group's premises late last year and was impressed with the calming and attractive fit-out that immediately makes those who enter in difficult situations feel welcome. As we sat and talked, Bronwen opened my eyes about the extent of the drug problem around Brisbane. She has a simple catchcry: 'every choice has a consequence'. And what simpler call could there be to the basic principle of personal responsibility that is so important to so many in this House. The Hope Foundation encourages people to address this issue and then also helps with practical matters—things as simple as provision of food, toiletries, clothing and toys for children. I urge people to come along on the afternoon of Saturday, 30 June for its Markets of Hope at St Bart's church at Mount Gravatt where handmade artworks, jewellery and other goods will be on sale. I encourage everybody to support this great community event and to get behind the Hope Foundation.