




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Mama Rene's

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.33 pm): I rise with great pride in this House to acknowledge the exceptionally good work of Mama Rene's led by Pastor John and his wife, Diane Dowell. This charitable foundation is based in my electorate of Chatsworth and I am proud to highlight its important charitable efforts in this chamber today on behalf of the residents of the Chatsworth electorate. Mama Rene's is a charity that works with homeless and disadvantaged individuals in Brisbane. Every Tuesday and Friday evening Pastor John, Diane and their selfless volunteers conduct a street kitchen in the Brisbane CBD providing a hot meal, a drink and, most importantly, a chat. Mama Rene's is committed to assisting individuals who may be in a crisis or who have fallen on hard times. Pastor John and his wife Diane open up their home at Carindale to anyone who may need support in their time of need. A roof over your head and a shoulder to lean on is essential to getting back on your feet. People like Pastor John and Diane are examples of the many unsung heroes in the Chatsworth electorate.

The charitable foundation is named after Pastor John's mother, Rene, who inspired him to devote a life to charity. His mother Rene took in returned soldiers to assist them when they fell on hard times after World War II. This explains why Pastor John and Diane named their organisation Mama Rene's—to pay tribute to the charitable acts of his magnificent mother. Pastor John and his wife Diane have for many years committed their lives to charity. They ran ministries in Kalgoorlie and Adelaide before settling in Brisbane, where they founded Mama Rene's. In 2008 they were both acknowledged for their charitable efforts and awarded a Pride of Australia medal. Mama Rene's is also a public benevolent institution which is endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office, with deductible gift recipient status. Last week I had the privilege of presenting Pastor John with a certificate acknowledging their latest grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. They received just under \$26,000 which went straight towards purchasing a new van to cater for their expanding needs as a charitable organisation.

I also had the pleasure of seeing the new van sitting proudly on the driveway in their house in the Chatsworth electorate. Mama Rene's has a strong relationship with Foodbank, another fantastic organisation in its own right, which provides the food that it prepares for the street kitchen. However, Mama Rene's is always keen to develop strategic partnerships with businesses and organisations which may be interested in donating or providing resources to assist its charitable endeavours. I have seen for myself the outstanding work that Mama Rene's does in the community. I have attended on Tuesday and Friday evenings as a volunteer in its street kitchen at Fortitude Valley. I have seen firsthand the importance of its presence in the community and how much it is indeed appreciated. I stand proud in the House to acknowledge the very important work of Mama Rene's and commend its work to the House.