




Speech By
Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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ADJOURNMENT

Samford Riding for the Disabled

 **Mr FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (11.04 pm): Recently having had some prior exposure to the good work the Samford RDA does for persons with disabilities, I was fortunate enough to spend some time with president Clare Emerson, secretary Jane Marsh and others at the Jenny O'Malley Arena, Samford Showgrounds.

Samford Riding for the Disabled is a voluntary, not-for-profit organisation which provides an amazing therapeutic, wholesome experience for disabled children and adults. Many riders with intellectual, specific learning disorders, injuries from accidents, central palsy, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, autism and many more benefit from their close engagement with the beautiful horses. Interactions with horses provide riders with improvement in core strength and stability, development of coordination and balance, enhancement of speech and communication skills, confidence building and social interaction. In addition, the volunteers gain a sense of fulfilment in assisting the riders at the same time as spending time in open space with beautiful horses.

Samford RDA horses and riders are always active in many events in and around the village. I remember during the election campaign seeing Peter Pan at the Samford Quilt Show and recently riders Andrew and Craig laying a wreath on Anzac Day at the Samford Avenue of Honour.

Earlier this year I donned a tux and went along to the Night to Remember event at the Samford Farmers Hall. It certainly was a night to remember, with many of the locals having a fine night of entertainment while raising funds for Samford RDA and the farmers hall. During the night I was approached by one of the Samford RDA members requesting assistance. Without hesitation I was offering whatever I could to provide the most benefit to the organisation. So in late April, on a beautiful autumn morning, I attended the showgrounds to sign up to a year's gold sponsorship and meet face to face my sponsored horse, Charlie Bun. The gold sponsorship will provide feed, shoeing and vet bills for this beautiful bay gelding of 13 years. Charlie Bun, or Charlie Gun, a former racehorse with 53 starts and a winner, now graces the Jenny O'Malley Arena, winning the hearts of all those children and adults who are lucky enough to be his rider for the day.

As we know, volunteers are the backbone of our communities. Organisations like Samford RDA would not exist without them. Sometimes riders need the help of at least three persons. There is no strict criteria of having a history of owning a horse or any involvement with them. All volunteers are appropriately trained in all safety procedures. I would encourage anyone who has some spare time to call in to Samford RDA on either a Wednesday or Saturday morning to consider volunteering or just to say hello. You might even be fortunate enough to meet my sponsored horse, Charlie Bun.