




Speech By
Peter Russo

MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK

Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2015

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Self Help Queensland

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (2.39 pm): In a sentence, Self Help Queensland helps Queenslanders to help themselves. It is my belief that this organisation is unique in this state. In 1983 a group of like-minded Queenslanders worked together from their homes to establish a network of people who would go out into the community to encourage and inform people of the self-help groups that were available to them when adversity strikes. This was no mean feat because, as we all know, a crisis can come in many forms—in the form of chronic illness, mental or physical health, grief and loss, or simply loneliness and isolation.

Self Help Queensland has created a model that provides a range of services to develop, sustain and promote self-help and self-help support groups throughout Queensland. It now works with approximately 2,500 groups and assists approximately 400,000 Queenslanders each year. The range of support groups now covers not only illness but also support for a range of community issues such as social justice and gender matters through to aged care and even climate change. On that point of social justice, the self-help group in Sunnybank ran a forum where migrants were able to come along and engage in a mock election, and they learnt how to vote and what our voting system was all about.

Its value to the community cannot be analysed purely by financial outlay. The Newman government in its wisdom took away funding from the self-help groups. The reason for this decision is not clear, but I do suggest perhaps the previous government's understanding of the community and its willingness to support and be supported was sadly lacking. I had the privilege of attending a presentation of 100 sewing machines which were donated by a member of the community who became aware of the situation through Self Help Queensland. The 100 sewing machines were donated to Somali women who had arrived in Queensland after 14 years in a refugee camp.

(Time expired)