



Speech By  
**Ros Bates**


**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 September 2015

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Robina Community Legal Centre**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (5.31 pm): I rise to inform the House of the fantastic work being done to assist victims of domestic violence in my electorate by the Robina Community Legal Centre. As members are aware, recent days saw residents of the Gold Coast and my electorate of Mudgeeraba shaken to the core by a number of tragic events related to the insidious crime that is domestic violence. While these events have been deeply upsetting for our community, we are fortunate that my electorate is home to the Robina Community Legal Centre, which offers free and discreet legal services to local residents who need help to deal with their domestic violence situation but who may be unable to seek private legal assistance.

Since commencing operations in February 2014, the Robina CLC has delivered free, front-line legal and referral services as an all-volunteer, unfunded community legal centre. I have visited the Robina CLC on a number of occasions and am always heartened to hear of the great work they do to provide this important community service to those who need it most in our local area, particularly in relation to domestic and family violence.

I am told that on average between 40 and 50 per cent of the Robina CLC's caseload is related to family and domestic violence. Unfortunately, however, despite the rise of domestic violence in our community and the crucial role they play in assisting domestic violence victims in my electorate, the Robina Community Legal Centre remains unfunded by the Labor government. While the Labor government has spent recent weeks talking about domestic violence, it appears that time after time the Robina Community Legal Centre's requests for funding from this government have been turned down. Not only that but, despite my representations to the Attorney-General in May requesting and inviting her to visit the centre to hear about their funding needs firsthand, she is yet to visit the Robina CLC. This produces real consequences in terms of the accessibility of legal services in my electorate and throughout the Gold Coast.

With only one other CLC in our city, due to conflict-of-interest requirements there is a strong possibility that those seeking legal advice may be turned away if another party has already approached another CLC. Should the Robina CLC receive funding certainty from the government, it would allow a direct expansion of the free, front-line services they offer and allow them to expand the number of ongoing cases they are equipped to deal with, in addition to employing dedicated staff and administrative support. The opposition stands ready to support the government in a bipartisan way to ensure we become a safer community. I urge the Labor government to ensure that the Robina Community Legal Centre receives funding to continue helping domestic violence victims in my electorate.