




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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ADJOURNMENT

Service Against Sexual Violence

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (11.52 pm): Earlier this month I was privileged to launch the Service Against Sexual Violence in Ipswich. The SASV is an initiative of the Domestic Violence Action Centre in Ipswich, and I am pleased to say that DVAC is receiving \$1.177 million from the 2016-17 budget to respond to domestic and family violence in Ipswich and a share in \$1.118 million to deliver support to vulnerable Queenslanders. This includes support to those who have experienced sexual violence, and I commend Minister Fentiman for her good work in this area.

Sexual violence is one of the most violating experiences an individual can endure. Sexual assault is any sexual contact against a person's will or without consent or that takes advantage of a person who is not able to give consent. This behaviour is reprehensible, and it involves any sexual behaviour that makes a person feel uncomfortable, frightened and threatened. Sexual assault can include any coerced or forced sexual activities or sex related activities, including those that involve violence or pain, rape, childhood sexual abuse and indecent assault. As members can appreciate, the impact of these actions on the victims of sexual assault are far-ranging and devastating. The Service Against Sexual Violence is committed to providing respectful sexual violence support services to survivors aged 14 and over.

It is difficult for survivors of sexual violence to come forward and share their stories, and it is one of the aims of the SASV to provide survivors with a safe and supportive space. This service is a community based organisation with a strong understanding of gender and diversity. It recognises that LGBTQIA individuals experience significant levels of both physical and sexual violence. The service also acknowledges the diversity of experiences held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The SASV is committed to delivering sensitive services and providing a safe place for all.

The Service Against Sexual Violence provides counselling and support for women and men aged 14 years and over; support for family, friends and caregivers of survivors; information, advice and referral; group work for women, men and young people; and community education. These services are provided by a small but wonderful and dedicated team of two counsellors and a part-time team leader. I would like to make special mention of two DVAC workers: General Manager Gabrielle Borgaard and Operations Manager Bec Shearman, who have spearheaded this new service.

The service works closely with West Moreton Hospital and Health Service providers, including community and acute mental health teams, the Sexual Health Clinic and Sexual Assault Response Team and other stakeholders. The SASV is an excellent initiative and I look forward to working with them into the future.