




Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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ADJOURNMENT

Mercy Community Services

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (10.25 pm): Since becoming the member for Condamine, I have attended a large number of functions, countless meetings and briefings, many school celebrations, special birthdays and anniversaries, citizen ceremonies and local shows. It is difficult to compare these events with the two occasions on which I have visited the Mercy Community Services' facility in Toowoomba.

Gayle Sainsbury and her dedicated team provide a service to vulnerable children and their families in the Darling Downs region. Listening to Gayle speak about her young clients was heartbreaking and made me appreciate even more the wonderful family that I have. The work performed by the Mercy Community Services has been embraced by the whole community. This was evidenced when local community groups came together to create a wonderful therapeutic garden and play area where children can enjoy being outside in a safe and beautiful environment.

The project was initiated by Liz Wagner and her willing group of volunteers who established a welcoming garden inclusive of murals, lawn, vegetable plots, shrubs and pathways. Students and teachers from Concordia Lutheran College designed and built the play equipment located in the garden, much to the delight of the children.

Catherine McAuley founded the Sisters of Mercy in Ireland in 1831, with Mercy Family Services being sponsored by the Brisbane Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. Their work continues today with many improvements being made to the care and services provided. In Toowoomba, Mercy Community Services deliver an inclusive, responsive and innovative service for children, young people and families. They assist disadvantaged and vulnerable people and families by making them feel valued, reconnected and strengthened, and giving them hope for the future.

I witnessed the love and devotion of the staff at Mercy Community Services to the children they support in their quest to provide them with the skills to become more resilient and place value on their position in our society. There is a team of multidisciplinary psychologists and social workers as well as physical therapists who assist in achieving these goals. At Mercy Community Services the recently renovated kitchen is a much loved place for children to enjoy the tactile experience of cooking. Cooking utilises sight, touch, smell and taste, and the end result is usually delicious—something not lost on the staff or the children.

I would like to thank Gayle and her team for welcoming me to Mercy Community Services. I was genuinely moved by the dedication shown to improving the lives of vulnerable children and young people within our community. Congratulations on the wonderful work that you do.