




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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ADJOURNMENT

Share the Dignity

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (1.39 am): I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of the House the life-changing work of one of my Sandgate constituents, Rochelle Courtenay. Rochelle is the CEO and founder of the not-for-profit charity Share the Dignity, which helps provide homeless women with sanitary care products. Share the Dignity is an example of the power of one person to make a difference in their community and their country.

This organisation was born because of Rochelle's drive and compassion to ensure that no woman suffered the indignity of having to choose between buying food or buying sanitary products. For the approximately 46,000 homeless women across the country, this is a choice that is all too familiar and unfortunate.

Rochelle's work started a national conversation of the sanitary needs of homeless women, resulting in an outpouring of empathy and generosity for this important cause. Around 450 products were donated in the initial drive in May last year in Sandgate, rapidly growing to over 1.5 million sanitary care products being given in total by the end of 2015. An appearance on the Ten Network's *The Project* and a viral social media presence propelled Rochelle's cause to Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and internationally.

This year Rochelle hopes to collect more than five million sanitary care products for charities, with the help of community groups such as Sandbag, which is in my electorate. Rochelle is now spearheading the cause for sanitary care companies to print the national domestic violence hotline number, 1800RESPECT, on the packets of all their products.

Rochelle strongly believes that there is a correlation between domestic violence and mental health issues and the rise in homelessness. This is an issue that is increasingly affecting very young and older women. I am proud of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to end domestic and family violence in Queensland, as well as the provision of increased funding for mental health and wellbeing.

I am pleased that my Sandgate electorate office is to be the first place in the nation to receive a donation box for the new drive beginning in April. To ensure Rochelle's message is spread as far as possible, I would encourage all members to promote Share the Dignity's work in their electorates and collect donations. Thanks to Rochelle and hundreds of volunteers, thousands of women in need across Australia now have benefited from this amazing initiative.