




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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ADJOURNMENT

Women at the Wheel Program

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (7.54 pm): I rise this evening to celebrate a fantastic initiative in my own electorate which is empowering the lives of refugee and migrant women. I cannot think of a better story to tell in the adjournment debate following our historic win in legalising termination of pregnancy here in Queensland for all of our Queensland women.

Access Community Services and Transurban have partnered to deliver support and training to allow 30 women to obtain their Queensland driver's licence. The Women at the Wheel program provides training with qualified driving instructors to assist with developing the theoretical and practical skills required to drive. This is an incredible program giving migrant and refugee women the training and confidence to overcome so many of the barriers they face. It gives them independence. They can now take their kids to school and gain employment. This is changing their lives. I would like to thank the incredible work of Access for developing this program.

So many of us take the ability to drive a car and have that independence for granted. Women from these backgrounds face additional barriers such as financial constraints, social and cultural expectations, family commitments, language barriers and often a lack of personal confidence. It is heartwarming to see these women overcome these barriers and gain independence.

We know that by giving women increased mobility we can break the cycle of poverty and isolation as they are able to participate in the workforce and our wider community. Logan is such a success story when it comes to multiculturalism. Logan City is one of the most multicultural cities in Australia. There are more ethnic groups living in Logan than in New York City.

At a time when our politics is becoming increasingly polarised and intolerant, I think it is important to share stories of the incredible work in our communities to improve integration and the welcome that we have in Logan for refugees and migrants. One participant of the program that I had the pleasure of meeting, Behnaz, has an incredible story to share. She arrived in Australia with her three young children in 2016 on a Women at Risk visa. Participating in the program means that Behnaz can drive one of her children, who has a medical condition, to their specialist medical appointments. She also hopes that by completing the program she is able to gain a job and help provide for her young family. I wish her and the rest of the participants the very best of luck in their driving exams but also the very best of luck in their future in Logan.