



Speech By  
**Stephen Andrew**


**MEMBER FOR MIRANI**

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Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2018

## ADJOURNMENT

### Mirani Electorate, Bamboo Projects

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (7.19 pm): The member for Mount Ommaney and the member for Maroochydore have spoken very seriously about suicide over the last two days. Charities play a vital role in society and in our individual communities. Often run by volunteers, they offer assistance to those who are most vulnerable in our communities and those who may have nowhere else to turn.

Bamboo Projects is a charity which uses outdoor therapies to help people with mental illness, suicidal ideation and physical disabilities and anyone who is socially, emotionally and relationally isolated. They have been running community activities for three years, using fishing and hiking activities to build connection, establish relationships, walk life with people who are struggling and offer realistic strategies and ideas to manage their mental health and interpersonal relationships more successfully.

They also hold community events once a month where people can attend and utilise free jumping castles, face painting, fishing lessons, barbecues or just have a chat. One of their most recent events had over 400 people in attendance. These events target low-income earners who may not typically be able to access events such as these. By removing the cost barrier to attending, it provides an open and welcoming event for anyone to attend. Attendees know that the Bamboo Projects staff care because there is no financial gain and they are there for the pure purpose of serving the community.

Many of their participants report that they are socially isolated, lonely, using prescription and non-prescription substances to cope or struggling with suicidal thoughts. Over the last year, they have seen participants form friendships with each other and Bamboo Projects staff, develop new skills, improve their mental health, report reduction in suicidal thoughts, improve their physical health, stop using illegal drugs and gain employment. In fact, some participants have returned to the workforce for the first time in years after working with Bamboo Projects.

There are gaps in the system which do not allow for current funding to such a cause as it is not a clinical service, but that is the point of difference of Bamboo Projects and their key to success. Being outdoors allows for a more comfortable environment than an office space, and they have found that people open up much quicker about their concerns. They are offered strategies and tools to assist them with moving forward in their life. These strategies have proven successful through the mental health battles that the founders of Bamboo Projects have been through themselves.

Dr Shannon Morton is one of the board members of Bamboo Projects Education. She provides a professional point of view when it comes to making decisions for the charity and is a source of advice when they need extra expertise. Dr Shannon Morton is qualified to treat all mental health and behavioural disorders. She is a qualified psychiatrist with a subspecialty in children and adolescents.

*(Time expired)*