




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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ADJOURNMENT

North West Youth Accommodation Service

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (6.04 pm): I rise today to speak about the sterling work provided by the North West Youth Accommodation Service. The service is funded by the Palaszczuk government as part of our Housing Strategy and has seen regular increases in support since 2015. The service plays an essential role in assisting young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to establish roots and create stability in their lives. The material aid, domestic assistance, self-reliance training and financial management skills provided by the service all contribute to cultivate social inclusion and a sense of self-worth.

It is important to recognise that homelessness is not a choice. It can be caused by a number of reasons and is usually the result of a combination of factors which are often beyond any individual's control. Homelessness can be the result of a mild trigger such as a car breakdown or more commonly the loss of a job—to say nothing of family crises, unexpected pregnancies or domestic violence. For people living week to week, even the threat of homelessness can cause stress on families and dislocation from community.

For young people particularly who are still trying to find their way in the world homelessness can greatly impede their life possibilities and create a downward spiral which is particularly difficult to escape from. North West is focused on helping young people who are aged between 16 and 25 and who find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness. The service is dedicated to transitioning those people to independent living by offering safe accommodation and a healthy environment for lives to thrive.

The work is demanding but rewarding, with staff in the service providing an exceptional level of individual tailored programs for each young person in the service because no two person's circumstances are the same and no two programs are like. Since it was founded in 1986, North West Youth Accommodation Service has helped hundreds of young people to reclaim their lives and transition to independence.

I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary work of Nicole Walsh and her team and the management committee and volunteers led by Robert Granger. Homelessness is a daily reality for over 100,000 Australians but it is not a situation which any caring society can deem acceptable.

The Palaszczuk government believes that helping people who are homeless to get back into housing and to assist them to take control of their own lives is a worthy investment in Queensland's future. Through services such as North West, this is what we are doing as a government. The only thing which ends homelessness is having a home.