



Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Dyslexia Awareness Month

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.00 pm): Today I rise to let people know that October is national Dyslexia Awareness Month. Dyslexia, dysgraphia and dyscalculia are something that affect our community and they go a little bit unseen. Unfortunately, what they really mean is that people struggle to read and comprehend in the way that 90 per cent of the population would be able to absorb information easily. Interestingly enough, in our First Nations people it was never a problem until settlement because of course there was no written language. It exists in different cultures around the world and it exists in nearly all human populations at about the same percentage of population.

This issue is something that we need to take very seriously because part of my portfolio responsibilities cover Corrective Services. What we find in Corrective Services is that there is a massive overrepresentation of the prison population who have dyslexia. Often this is exhibited in the same ways that I exhibited it at school. I was not a great student at school. I was frustrated. I felt stupid. I would often be embarrassed because I could not do the things that others would do, so I consequently did woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing and anything I could do that got me out of having to read and write a lot, and that was how it exhibited for me. That meant that it limited a lot of options, so I left school young and started work. At that time computers were only just beginning, but I found myself working on a computer where I got to do lots of Excel sheets and I found that much easier than reading books.

There are lots of problems that can come from dyslexia. In today's world with YouTube and learning from video and all of the technology that is available, there are many ways to get around this problem. We need to make sure that our educational institutions are aware of the different ways that people will learn and the different ways they can observe knowledge so that people do not fall behind early in their education, which is what happened to me, because once you start falling behind you just think you are stupid and you think you cannot keep up and so, basically to save the embarrassment, you just misbehave and then you get sent out and that was a much easier way to deal with it than actually trying to catch up to everybody else. It is really important that we are aware and that we do take it seriously and look for alternative ways to make sure we can educate because there is a great untapped resource of people who have a different way of thinking, a different way of approaching problems and a different set of solutions available to them if we can only give them the knowledge they need to be able to participate fully and effectively in our community.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Toowoomba North, for your advocacy on a very important issue.