




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Riverlife Baptist Church; State Schools, Air Conditioning

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.22 pm): I rise to speak about the truly amazing efforts of Mount Ommaney businesses, community groups and churches alike as we recover from COVID-19. What a shame I only have three minutes. Let's start with Riverlife church which has been absolutely outstanding in supporting international students trapped in Australia during the COVID crisis. Under the leadership of Pastor Robyn, they have provided financial, emotional and pastoral care to an incredibly vulnerable group in our community. It makes me sick to say that some people have sought to take advantage of our international students at this terrible time.

Pastor Robyn told me of one vulnerable young woman who could no longer afford to pay her rent. She had lost her hospitality job due to COVID-19—a common situation. Instead of being understanding and trying to help, her landlord pressured her for sexual favours in lieu of financial payment. This is wrong for so many reasons and it makes me sick to my stomach. Thank goodness a friend put her in touch with Riverlife. She was able to get help, both financial and emotional, as well as being put in touch with the authorities. I commend Riverlife for their wonderful work. They have heard so many horrific stories at this time.

COVID exposes the worst in people at a time of crisis and it is easy to despair, but equally it shows the best, and there are many examples like Riverlife church throughout my community. Last night I sat in on the Centenary State High School P&C meeting to thank longstanding president, Dave Harris, in his retirement from the role as president, for his service to the P&C and in particular his longstanding advocacy for air conditioning in our local state schools.

After I was elected Dave was first through my door, but not the last, to advocate for the government to finish air-conditioning classrooms in our state schools. As I have said before, the western suburbs of Brisbane and Mount Ommaney are hot. Summer frequently reaches 40 degrees for the kids in class. I made it my mission to convince the Minister for Education of the importance of this work. Christmas came early when the Premier and the Minister for Education announced last year that every remaining classroom in Mount Ommaney would be air-conditioned. Today I can confirm it is done. I thank Dave and the other awesome P&Cs in my electorate for all the wonderful work they undertook to get this critical work—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Ms PUGH: I am trying to thank my P&Cs. Can you show a little respect!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Mount Ommaney, I am more than capable of conducting this chamber. I do not need your assistance.

Ms PUGH: Thank you for your guidance. I apologise, Mr Deputy Speaker. I thank Dave and the other awesome P&Cs in my electorate for the wonderful work they undertook to get this critical work going. Thanks to your hard work we were able to finish the job, but you deserve so much credit. Thank you.

I finish with a story that illustrates the importance of air conditioning. One week after the announcement, I was attending the Corinda State School primary graduation. Their hall is hot, and so was their guest list! Last year they invited Dr Chris Brown to be their guest speaker.

(Time expired)