




Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

Record of Proceedings, 22 April 2020

ADJOURNMENT

Macalister Electorate, Roads; MacYAC; World Autism Awareness Month

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (10.31 pm): I take this opportunity in this extraordinary sitting of parliament to update the House during these difficult times on some good news within my electorate. After ongoing discussions with South Coast Transport and Main Roads and regular contact with individuals and businesses in the Beenleigh area, I wrote to the minister earlier this year requesting that consideration be given to funding a review of the Beenleigh state roads and the development of an overall strategy to upgrade these roads to make them safer for road users, pedestrians and cyclists.

Last week I received confirmation from the minister that over half a million dollars will be allocated in the budget to investigate safety upgrades and efficiency opportunities along the Beenleigh Connection Road. Intersections at City Road, George Street, James Street and the exit 35 intersection at Rochester Drive are under consideration. This is fantastic news for Beenleigh residents, as well as for the growing number of road users who travel through Beenleigh to access the M1, and I look forward to seeing the development of upgrades which will see safety improved on our Beenleigh roads.

During times of great stress I am always heartened to see the community come together and never more so than when it is our young people at the forefront. Last year I established the Macalister Youth Advisory Committee, or MacYAC, comprising young locals who had an interest in being involved in developing a more connected community. Whilst COVID-19 has impacted the projects that MacYAC had planned to implement this year, they have turned their focus to assisting our most vulnerable. In the past 10 days the MacYAC team have made almost 1,000 phone calls to Macalister residents over the age of 70 to check on them and talk to them about whether they need to register for the Care Army. If this is an example of our community's future I think our kids are doing okay.

On our kids doing okay, being World Autism Awareness Month, I would like to update the House on where our autism journey is at. I wish I had more positive news, but like many thousands of families with a disability we have been left behind by the NDIA. His level of disability apparently falls below the threshold for eligibility for the NDIS and the NDIA meeting to discuss his case I have to say was the most brutal I have ever had. I have spent every day since he was born talking up his abilities, focusing on what he can do, not on what he cannot. But this system appears to only assist those who are able to demonstrate barriers in their child's life. It is a shame that those who have disabilities other than physical ones will have such a hard time accessing support.

Our HCWA funding for this year has already run out and it will not be renewed. No-one is quite sure what continuity of support funding will look like. We have no details. I wonder how many other children are being left behind. On a positive note, for a boy who has no concept of time he has absolutely no idea that this is not the longest home day ever and no understanding of the turmoil that is happening outside the front door. To show his development over the past 12 months, I will update the House on this year's self-portrait which I have already tabled. For the interest of members, he now has a body, stands on the grass amongst the flowers and basks under a blue sky.

Tabled paper: Child's drawing [\[644\]](#).