



Speech By  
**Jessica Pugh**


**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 March 2021

## ADJOURNMENT

### Mount Ommaney Electorate

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.03 pm): Late last year our Oxley community gathered on a very hot November Sunday to officially open a red bench in Oxley's Cawonga Park. Members will be aware that these benches are meant to start a conversation about domestic violence, in this case in the community of Oxley, and I am proud to say that this conversation got off to a great start in large part thanks to Oxley local Marilyn Roberts.

Marilyn is one of those amazing women in Oxley. She is always busy volunteering here, there and everywhere and on this day she was the guest speaker at the opening of the bench alongside Betty from the Red Rose Foundation. Marilyn is a survivor of domestic violence and spoke in harrowing detail about her experience. It brought me and everyone there that day to tears, particularly as she spoke about the role of the bystanders in her family and the role that we can all play when we see a family member or a friend being abused. I know that everybody who was there that day was touched by her honesty and willingness to share so that we can do better for future generations.

That event was well supported by the team at the Oxley Boomerang Bags which provided a lot of volunteer support to make the day a success, but tonight I want to single out just one of them—Lara Minion, who has been instrumental in setting up and sustaining the Oxley Boomerang Bags group that has made hundreds upon thousands of gorgeous high-quality bags over the years. Lara has been an amazing volunteer in our community in many ways over many years and I am sad to say that she and her family, the Minions, are going on an adventure around Australia now that it is COVID-safe to do so and leaving our community for the next little while. She has promised that the family will return in August next year and I am going to hold her to that because we are going to miss them greatly.

Finally, just down the road is the Oxley Men's Shed, which was opened and started by John Brown. He started that shed over a decade ago and has only just stepped down as president after continuously serving in that position for over 10 years. That is an amazing commitment at any age, but John is well into his 90s and I think that is pretty outstanding. Men's sheds have normalised the conversation around men's mental health. We know that suicide is the No. 1 cause of death in men aged 18 to 45, so this is incredibly important. The flow-on effects from men's sheds have also been that men can increasingly see the value and importance of close male friends who can be confidants and support people in tough times, even if they are not members of sheds. The shed in Oxley has so many members and it has certainly become an Oxley institution. It is a wonderful way for blokes to take care of their mental health and the men of Oxley certainly owe John for opening it.