




Speech By
Shane King

MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Sweet Dreams and Good Night Wishes, Care Bag Appeal

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (7.28 pm): Tonight I rise to speak on a cause that is becoming an annual adjournment topic for me, the Care Bag Appeal by community organisation Sweet Dreams and Good Night Wishes.

Ms Pugh: Hear, hear!

Mr KING: Thank you. Care bags are put together for children aged two to 16 who are entering foster care, many of whom have no choice but to leave home with no spare clothes, no possessions and no comfort items. These wonderful care bags include a full set of clothes, pyjamas, underwear, socks, a toothbrush, a hairbrush and a comfort item like a stuffed toy, blanket, journal or book, all enclosed in the child's very own new backpack. Many of the bags also include optional extras like hats and water bottles. All the items in care bags are brand new so that each recipient knows they were purchased especially for them.

Despite shorter notice than usual for the appeal this year due to restrictions imposed to shut down the spread of COVID-19, the delta spread here in Queensland, the response and generosity of our community was overwhelming. In total, my office—which I should point out is only one community drop-off point in our area—collected over 200 bags. It was a phenomenal response. Our deepest thanks goes to everyone who donated this year, especially when a lot of people are still doing it tough. I could not move inside my office for about a week, but it was for a worthy cause. Luckily, I had gotten used to using Zoom anyway!

A massive shout-out to Melissa, who started this movement, inspired by her work in child safety, and Melissa's mum, Vicki, who works tirelessly to collect, sort and pack the bags for further distribution. Quite a number of people who brought bags into my office this year said they had capacity to collect a lot more through work, school and social networks if they had more notice, so I have a feeling in 2022 I will need a bigger office and Vicki will need a bigger car. I look forward to reporting back during an adjournment next year.

As a proud dad and granddad, I know how important it is for kids to get a good start in the first years of their life. Sadly, some kids do not get the love, care and attention they desperately need in this time of vulnerability. Sadly, some parents do not have the skills necessary to look after a child. Other times there are substance abuse or family violence issues that sadly cause neglect and/or harm to children. It is especially heartbreaking when this becomes a generational issue.

With Child Protection Week coming up next week, it is a great time to think about what we can do raise awareness about early intervention and promote the message that protecting children is everyone's business. I want to end with a plug to a special virtual event coming up—Colour Our Community in Moreton Bay—run by Intercept Youth and Family Program, Accoras, and Mercy Community. I am really proud to be one of the sponsors this year. I encourage my fellow members and anyone watching at home to visit my Facebook for the link to get involved in this Child Protection Week initiative.