



Speech By  
**Peter Russo**  
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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Record of Proceedings, 26 May 2022

## ADJOURNMENT

### Sunnybank/Salisbury Meals on Wheels

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (6.16 pm): On 2 April representing the Premier, I had the great honour to attend the 50th anniversary of the Sunnybank/Salisbury Meals on Wheels. I am going to go into a little bit of the history of how the Meals on Wheels started in Sunnybank/Salisbury.

In February 1972 Father Tom Hegarty called a public meeting in the hope of forming the Sunnybank/Salisbury Meals on Wheels. The object was to provide one meal per day, five days per week to people in distress by reason of sickness, age or any other special circumstances. That was approved by the management committee. At the end of the first week, ending 14 April 1972, payment for 40 meals was recorded at 40 cents each. Today the cost is about \$9 a meal and, by today's standard, it is great value for a highly nutritious meal. By the end of 1974, Meals on Wheels had a waiting list of people needing service. On 9 September 1974 the Upper Mount Gravatt Meals on Wheels commenced and then in April 1976 the Acacia Ridge Meals on Wheels started.

It is important to note that Meals on Wheels not only deliver meals but also provide a vital service to isolated members of the community—the frail, aged and disabled, to name a few. These volunteers are often the only link to the outside world for many housebound people who may not have families to look after them and check to see if they are alright.

Today Sunnybank/Salisbury Meals on Wheels deliver on average 550 meals per week, and on 30 March they delivered their one-millionth meal. This is not just food but someone to say hello and ask, 'Are you okay?' I have had the great honour of delivering meals to members of my community for Meals on Wheels on many occasions. During these visits I have had some great conversations. The one element that was common in most of these was that they were alone and were delighted to have someone just to say hello.

At Christmastide I encouraged Meals on Wheels to make rum balls to give out to the attendees at the seniors Christmas event. They not only made the rum balls but also packaged them into Christmas bags for me. I should also let the House know that I acted as a food tester and can attest to the fact that they tasted as good as they look.

In May 2021 the Hon. Leeanne Enoch moved that the Community Support and Services Committee inquire into social isolation and loneliness in Queensland. The committee's task was to inquire into and report on the nature and extent of the impact of social isolation—

*(Time expired)*