




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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ADJOURNMENT

Sexual Violence Awareness Month

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (7.06 pm): During the month of October it was my great pleasure and honour to officially launch Sexual Violence Awareness Month at a special function hosted by the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence. I want to pay special tribute to founder, Di Macleod and our emcee, Narelle Poole. I broke my cardinal rule about winning raffles at functions. Rather than offering it back for redraw, I knew that Narelle wanted it, so I handed over the 10-kilogram block of Cadbury chocolate that I won on the morning. Not only was it my pleasure to launch the event but I also won a raffle prize!

The morning was well attended with over 400 guests in attendance. There were many multicultural groups represented on the morning. It was especially great to see Cornelia Babbage from Multicultural Families Organisation, Ree Ali from the Indian community and Joyce Cho from the Migrant Centre Organisation.

The latest data from Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety found that 51 per cent of women aged 24 to 30 had experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. Figures like these highlight how pervasive this issue is and how hidden it has been. Each day more survivors find their voices, and we are only now beginning to understand the true extent of sexual violence in our community.

During the month of October, the theme for Sexual Violence Awareness Month is 'Help, Hope, Change'. This provides an opportunity to learn more about how we can help survivors; what hope looks, sounds and feels like after trauma; and, importantly, how we can all contribute to change that supports survivors and holds perpetrators to account. Social change takes time and a great place to begin is to start by believing. This simple change offers help and hope, and makes a huge difference to a person's healing journey.

We were fortunate to hear from a survivor Caroline Bellenger, who is a recently returned surf lifesaving champion. She has been overseas representing Australia. She said in her presentation—

Staying silent on sexual assault compounds the trauma and gives the perpetrator a free pass. This is not a secret subject, not when one in three girls and one in six boys will experience child sexual assault before the age of sixteen. Many victims just need someone to listen, you're not expected to fix their problems, you just need to start by believing. Talking about it helps lift the shame from the victim and redirects it to where it belongs, the perpetrator.

I also want to thank those who turned out to support Bravehearts Day. I give special thanks to Pushpinder Oberoi and Priya Daga from The Indian Place on Chevron Island. We raised over \$7,000 for Bravehearts from the 50 guests who attended.

(Time expired)