




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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ADJOURNMENT

Wilkinson, Ms K

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.07 pm): Last April my community was shattered by the loss of local mum Kelly Wilkinson in the most horrific of ways. We hear about domestic violence incidents far too often, but when it happens in your suburb, on a street you drive past every day and to a mum who you see walking her kids to your local school, the impact of this kind of loss hits differently.

For so many people in Arundel and Parkwood, Kelly's death led to an outpouring of grief but also so much love towards her family from people who knew the beautiful person Kelly was or felt some connection to her through Arundel State School or our area more broadly. We came together as a community in Kelly's memory—around 1,000 people at a vigil just up the road from her house at the Parkwood golf course. That support and goodwill saw their GoFundMe reach nearly \$300,000 in donations.

The reality that Kelly's sister Danielle and her partner, Rhys, would have to take in Kelly's three children, along with the five they already had, meant that more was needed. Imagine that: eight kids under the age of 10 in one house! How do you deal with the practicalities of everyday life? How do you fit in that many beds? How do you handle it with just one bathroom? What sort of car do you need to transport that many kids? The answer to the last question is a mini bus, which is what they got. That is where the incredible efforts of Tamika Smith of My Bella Casa will make this family's life so much easier. I acknowledge her in the gallery tonight.

Tamika rallied her industry to build this family a new home. In the middle of a housing crisis, Tamika had that part sorted within 48 hours with the help of Metricon. Then she just need to find a block of land to put the house on that they were going to build. An exceptionally kind Gold Coaster, who must remain anonymous to protect the kids, donated the perfect site worth nearly a million dollars. Today we got to see the slab being poured and the very heavily customised house—Metricon do not normally build houses with seven bedrooms—will be finished by hopefully April next year.

The kids were there to see the start of construction today, in their little hard hats, already having figured out who was getting what bedroom, with the older siblings of course ensuring that the younger ones will be the ones who will have to share. I give a massive thank you to Tamika, to Metricon as well for bringing it altogether and to all of their suppliers from national brands to some of our local small businesses on the Gold Coast.

Finally, to my Gold Coast community: thank you for the support that you have shown and for how you stepped up to care for this family. I particularly want to acknowledge the work of Katie Omrod, from my office, who was instrumental in putting together that vigil and who felt this deeply as a fellow mum of Arundel State School. This house will never replace their loss or the grief that they feel, but it will make a huge impact to their life and the opportunities that they will have. Thank you, everyone.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Thank you, member for Bonney, for your important contribution.