



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**


**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2023

## ADJOURNMENT

### Red Cross Australia, Community Service Workers

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (7.27 pm): I rise to highlight the plight of six women specialist community service workers I met with last week along with our local Services Union organiser Wayne Inman. These women have worked tirelessly over almost 40 years to help support our community as loyal employees of Red Cross Australia, delivering the Intensive Family Support program to hundreds of Central Queensland families. IFS holistically supports parents and families doing it tough by improving parenting skills, providing assistance with budgeting, helping parents to develop coping skills, assisting with household management, encouraging children to attend school, improving family relationships and assisting parents to access health and welfare services.

The Red Cross specialist community support workers I met with did an excellent job over many years working right at the coalface with our community's most vulnerable children and families. They were hardworking, loyal and dedicated specialist community service workers meeting their KPIs and getting really excellent outcomes with their clients. I have no doubt that they saved lives, kept families together and have given children a brighter future as a result. I want to recognise them in this place for everything they have done for the parents and children in our community. Red Cross affirmed this in a letter on 27 September 2023 which said that Red Cross appreciates the team's commitment and work ethic throughout their employment. I table the letter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 27 September 2023, from the Chief People and Culture Officer, Australian Red Cross Society, Ms Jane Hollman, to the Secretary, The Services Union, Mr Neil Henderson, regarding employee payments [1631](#).

This has not gone unnoticed by the organisation, their clients and the community and is a testament to their character. Unfortunately, Red Cross Australia made the strategic decision to terminate their contract with the department a year early as a result of a strategic decision to focus on Red Cross Australia's core business, thereby making their staff in Rockhampton redundant. This has been enormously stressful for these women, who were then tasked with ensuring the closure of the Red Cross Rockhampton office whilst continuing to deliver frontline services for several months after they were notified. Red Cross did, however, offer the staff a bonus payment of five weeks salary as an incentive to remain working until the end of September to ensure the proper closure of the office and the program, which they accepted in good faith. They continued to work up to the closure at the end of last month.

Disappointingly, Red Cross reneged on their incentive bonus payment and have left these women in the lurch, stating that the incentive payment was communicated in error. Understandably, these workers feel coerced and undervalued by the decision of Red Cross to retract the retention payment. Red Cross has failed to honour their commitment to these hardworking, dedicated staff. The staff kept their end of the deal, so I would encourage Red Cross to keep theirs too.