



Speech By  
**Joan Pease**


**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**St Paul's Anglican Church**

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.54 pm): I am always delighted to rise and speak about my beautiful bayside electorate. I would particularly like to acknowledge the St Paul's Manly parishioners who are here today.

As church attendance drops to an all-time low, one parish in my electorate has forged forward with an innovative model inspired by an ABC television series. St Paul's Anglican Church in Manly faced the same challenges as faith communities across the country: low numbers of predominantly elderly people, ageing assets and dwindling finances. They were no longer viable yet remained determined to stay together as a community. Instead of poking their heads in the sand, this committed and courageous group decided to try something different.

As a proactive response to their situation, and with a heart for the whole Manly community, St Paul's voluntarily opted to sell the site of their current church to enable the much needed expansion of the neighbouring Manly State School. Education Queensland will build new classrooms and playgrounds and, in consultation with St Paul's, will retain the church and refurbish it as a student performance centre.

Meanwhile, St Paul's will relocate to a local Anglicare chapel, but not as a traditional parish. Instead, St Paul's is creating a new model of faith community inspired by the ABC's *Old People's Home For 4 Year Olds*. The transition would not just be a physical move but a huge shift from the traditional Sunday attendance model of church to an intergenerational community offered in partnership with staff and residents at Anglicare's EM Tooth Memorial Home and students from local schools visiting as part of service learning agreements.

Partly seed funded by the sale of their former site and partly by parishioner generosity, this new model is now fully funded for five years and guided by a strategic plan informed by the whole community. The plan incorporates traditional ministries like Sunday services and mothers union while casting a vision for a new faith community centred on intergenerational wellbeing. This took four years and a huge amount of hard work and courage—something St Paul's parishioners have in spades. All too often these days we are quick to dismiss older Australians, and yet here is a group of elderly faithful on the front line of innovation.

None of this would have been possible of course without strong leadership and authentic relationships. In the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges, St Paul's parish priest, Father Daniel Hobbs, was relentless in his commitment to his people, gently and lovingly leading them through unprecedented change and uncertainty, always with an unshakeable conviction. His approach to community engagement powerfully brought together other great leaders in my electorate like Manly State School Principal Clayton Carnes and the St Paul's parish council.

Fittingly, the final service in the church will be Good Friday, with the first service in the chapel held on Easter Sunday. It has been a blessing and honour to work alongside the people of St Paul's, Manly. I am excited that something unique and hopeful has emerged in my electorate. I look forward to continuing the journey with these, as Father Daniel calls them, beautiful humans.