




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 25 October 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Kruger, Mr J

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.00 pm): We all know the old line that not all heroes wear capes. Tonight I would like to talk about the 2023 Westfield Local Hero Award winner, Mr Jeff Kruger. I rise to speak about the selfless work that Jeff has displayed in the Chatsworth area for many years.

About three or four years ago Jeff reached out to a mate who was going through a really hard time and simply suggested that they go for a walk and have a bit of a chat. From the kernel of this very kind act and gesture more than 750 men have connected over the past couple of years, with over 60 men participating in weekly walks, walking and talking. Jeff is the co-founder and treasurer of Men's Walk & Talk, a not-for-profit community group that regularly meets in two locations. Walk, talk and connect is about men supporting each other in a healthy environment. I can personally vouch for the fact that the group meets literally every Sunday morning rain, hail or shine in my local patch at Minnippi Parklands at Carindale.

In addition to this activity Jeff also supports mental health in our local community. Monthly Men's Health Mind Workshops run in conjunction with the Hope Hubs at Westfield Carindale, and through these workshops participants are linked with professionals who provide mental health first aid training. Those in need are also connected with counsellors and psychologists who provide additional support. Westfield Carindale have awarded a community grant of \$20,000 to help Jeff and Men's Walk & Talk to greater assist those in need in our local community. Men's Walk & Talk will use the funds to register as a charity and fund 30 counselling sessions for at-risk community members. Men's Walk & Talk is dedicated to running mental health awareness events and raising funds for local charities and community groups.

To quote Jeff, 'When I started this journey I would have been happy to help one person, but to have started something that has had such a positive impact on our community is amazing.' I have actually observed this firsthand. Over the last couple of years I have attended maybe three or four, sometimes five a year, and I have literally seen men who, when you go for that first walk, pretty much say nothing. If you go back three or four months later and you happen to be walking with that same gentleman, it is just amazing how much they have indeed come out of their shell. It really has made a huge difference to so many lives.

When I am asked what the favourite part of my job is, it really is getting involved in the local community with groups such as this. There were many people up against Jeff for this local hero award. He was honoured to win it, and I take this opportunity to congratulate Jeff Kruger.