




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Stepping Stone Clubhouse

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (8.04 pm): There is a wonderful organisation in Coorparoo called the Stepping Stone Clubhouse. It is part of an international clubhouse movement. The clubhouse is organised around the belief that every individual has something valuable to contribute to society. Clubhouses effectively help people build self-confidence and end the social and economic isolation so often associated with mental illness.

I visit there as often as I possibly can. Every time I visit clubhouse I walk away feeling better about myself and better about the world, and I know that is the effect they have on everyone who goes there. It has also become a regular part of my Christmas Day activities. I drop in there every year on Christmas Day and spend a bit of time there because they are open 365 days of the year. They have 1,389 members spread across Brisbane and last year they served 7,676 lunches. The clubhouse model is built around the work ordered day, so people attend there voluntarily each day. It is run by people who experience or live with mental health issues. They do a range of things including running a commercial kitchen, so they provide very cheap meals for people. They also help people get into employment. Last year they had 68 people in employment and 39 in education working towards employment. That does not count all the other people who go there who are also already in employment.

Unfortunately, a couple of years ago a couple of my colleagues from the health department went out. Being good health bureaucrats, they looked around and did not see any pills or med charts or anything that might suggest this was a clinical service, so they decided to defund it. That was a real shame and a real shock. I went to see the then health minister, who is now the Premier, with clubhouse and said, 'There's a real issue here. The challenge we have is while this organisation does great work, it is difficult to prove what they do because it is just not a clinical service.' I am pleased to say we had the funding reinstated. It has been increased and there is now a clubhouse on the north side as well at Aspley. They also gave us some money to do an evaluation. A couple of weeks ago they finally tabled the evaluation report. It proved what we all know: that clubhouse makes a huge difference to people. There are so many different statistics in it but one is around rates of hospitalisation. When they compared existing members to new members, the rates of hospitalisation were incredibly low amongst existing members of clubhouse. It makes a real difference to people's lives. Every time you go there you see people who are just doing so well.

I will finish with something that one of the participants said. They stated—

... this is a place I can come to, so I trust that reassurance. Because of my condition it's imperative to feel like you've got some place, not just to get support, but to come to that gets it ... you know when your symptoms are playing out, you still feel safe, you still feel secure, and I think that security, being a chronic condition, is reassuring.