

4 December 2008

## CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

### Thorndale Foundation

**Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (9:57 a.m.)** — I rise to take note of the valuable work being undertaken by the Thorndale Foundation. The Thorndale Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that provides accommodation, community participation and employment opportunities for people with an intellectual disability. This year the Thorndale Foundation is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Thorndale was established in 1958 by a group of local families with children with intellectual disabilities. At this time the trend was for these children to be placed in an institution; however, these families chose to fight to ensure that their children were given the opportunity to grow up as active participants in our community.

In 1959 Mr Clem Payne approached the Mayor of Penrith requesting that a public meeting be called to discuss the possibility of starting a school for children with an intellectual disability. Various local groups and organisations were contacted and a meeting was held. A committee was formed, headed by Mr A Little, the former Headmaster of Kingswood Public School. The Ex-Naval Men's Hall in Penrith was hired as the school's first premises. On 3 June 1959 classes commenced with two teachers and 14 students. On the first day of classes the school was presented with its first bus by the Penrith Lions Club. The school was officially opened on 29 August 1959. Twelve months after opening, the school was given the name 'Thorndale' in recognition of the significant contribution made by Mrs Jean Thornley and Mr Jack Daly, neither of whom had a child with an intellectual disability.

The Thorndale Foundation has continued to grow over the years and is now housed at Rance Road, Werrington, with three residential cottages at Orchard Hills. Thorndale has provided to many people with an intellectual disability the opportunity to work and be active participants in our local community. The foundation has grown from its modest beginnings as a school to now providing a range of services, including a supported employment program, accommodation facilities and centre based community programs. These services have provided the foundation's clients with the opportunity to be active in their community, enjoy social interaction, achieve personal growth and build their own self-esteem.

Earlier this year I had the opportunity to attend an open day held by the foundation and was able to see firsthand some of the foundation's important work in my electorate. More importantly, however, I was able to see the positive impact that this foundation has had on its clients and their families. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the CEO, Helen Carter; the board of directors, Chairperson Cathy Gault, Brian Goodridge, Jan Caspers, Peter Smith and Tim Morris; and all the staff and volunteers of the foundation. The Thorndale Foundation is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when determined people have great aspirations for their loved ones and commit themselves and their energies to ensuring that these aspirations are realised. I congratulate the foundation on its 50th anniversary and wish Thorndale all the best for the future.