

13 May 2009

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Lindsay Electorate St Marys NEWPIN Centre

Mr BRADBURY» (Lindsay) (9:33 AM) —During the parliamentary recess, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of UnitingCare Burnside's NEWPIN Centre at St Marys. Burnside has been running its NEWPIN, or New Parent Infant Network, program for the last 10 years in three states in Australia. NEWPIN is an early intervention program that targets vulnerable families who are socially isolated and whose children are in danger of, or suffer from, neglect and abuse. Originally developed in the United Kingdom, NEWPIN aims to break intergenerational patterns of child abuse and social exclusion by equipping parents with life skills and a better understanding of the development of their children. Giving parents these skills empowers them to take control of their lives.

Parents attending NEWPIN courses generally report an improvement in their confidence and self-esteem, which then has a positive impact on the way they engage with and care for their children. Underpinning this process is the involvement of mentors—parents who have successfully completed a NEWPIN course and have gained the personal skills to support others in breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect. It is these mentors who will be central to the success of the new NEWPIN centre at St Marys.

Five former NEWPIN course participants—Leanne Fyfe, Kathy Doyle, Mabel Venica, Jenny McNamara and Terri Butler—are now staff members at Burnside, and it was fitting that they cut the ribbon to launch this important new service. Collectively, these women and their inspiring personal stories represent the new beginning that a service like NEWPIN can offer parents caught in a cycle of destructive behaviour. The NEWPIN mentors show parents that with determination and support you can turn things around. I offer each and every one of the participants the best of luck on the journey that they will undertake to improve their lives and the lives of their families.

There are now three NEWPIN centres in Western Sydney. Each of these centres assist between 120 and 150 clients each year. Parents attend the centre for up to four days a week, 50 weeks a year, for an 18-month intensive parenting intervention course, while children are engaged in play therapy sessions and counselling support. Services like NEWPIN are at the frontline of helping our most vulnerable families, and they are staffed by dedicated men and women. I have had the honour of meeting many of our frontline community workers and without them our community would be much poorer. The staff at NEWPIN St Mary's are no exception, and I would like to acknowledge the coordinator, Tracie Mitchell, and the former St Mary's Uniting Church minister, Keith Hamilton, for his ongoing support of the service. I also acknowledge Minister David Riethmuller and his congregation for their tremendous support of this project. I look forward to witnessing the results of the great work of the team at NEWPIN St Mary's. I know that this service will have a beneficial impact upon the lives of many local residents in my community.