

## **STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

### **Fadden Electorate: Regional Partnerships Program**

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (9.56 a.m.)—Madam Deputy Speaker, let me join the chorus of congratulations on your elevation to the position of Deputy Speaker. I rise to register my concern as to the uncertainty regarding the ongoing Regional Partnerships program. I note that the Leader of the House and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government commented that the Rudd Labor government is committed to ongoing investment in regional Australia. He is quoted as saying:

We are having a very close look at the regional partnership program and we will be saying more about it in the future.

I note the minister has also said that he intends to keep it but to make significant changes. The uncertainty I raise this morning is that a number of applications are currently being held up, awaiting ministerial approval. One particular application in my seat of Fadden is for the Oxenford Youth Centre, which is the only youth centre in the strong growth corridor from Oxenford through to Coomera. You may be aware, Madam Deputy Speaker, that Fadden is the fastest-growing electorate in the nation. More people are coming to Fadden than to any other electorate in the entire country, and they are moving into this growth corridor. The strain on infrastructure, especially on social infrastructure, is significant. This is the only youth centre in the area and it deserves priority from the minister.

I have met with the area consultative committee, whose members I applaud for their generous use of their personal time, being volunteers, and we are working on two further applications: one for the Oxenford-Coomera RSL subbranch hall and the other for St Vincent de Paul, for 28 units for homeless people. At present the area consultative committee is waiting for guidance from the minister.

I think everyone in the chamber would agree that homelessness is a significant problem. In Fadden—and this is the fastest-growing electorate in the nation—there is not a single bed for the homeless in the entire electorate. There are nine units for domestic violence, for women and children, but none for men and children. Having spoken to those who do great work on the Gold Coast, I know there are more and more men and children who are now homeless. Clearly, given there is not a single homeless unit available in this area, the minister providing certainty as to the Regional Partnerships program so that we can submit appropriate documentation to support St Vincent de Paul having the 28 units for the homeless built is certainly worthy of the attention of the House. I simply ask that the minister look at the Regional Partnerships program and provide certainty as quickly as possible as to how it will go forward in the future. I look forward to his response.