



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Isaacs Electorate: Mentone Community  
Assistance and Information Bureau**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 15 June 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 15 June 2015  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Dreyfus, Mark, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr DREYFUS** (Isaacs—Deputy Manager of Opposition Business) (10:48): Just over two weeks ago, I was in the beautiful suburb of Mentone in my electorate to meet with representatives of the Mentone Community Assistance and Information Bureau. The Mentone Community Assistance and Information Bureau is located on Florence Street, Mentone, about 200 metres from the train station. It is a few hundred metres from the bureau to the beach and barely 50 metres to the office of Senator Fifield, which is just down the street.

For many years the Mentone CAB has offered emergency relief in the form of food vouchers and occasional emergency accommodation, as well as advice, for people in need, about local service providers. I met with representatives of the CAB, Cathy Hassall, Bill Pimm and Pauline Abourizik, to discuss the Abbott government's drastic funding cut to the CAB. The CAB's federal funding has been slashed from over \$50,000 in 2014-15 to just \$20,869 for the 2015-16 financial year—a cut of well over half of its funding compared to the previous financial year.

I have twice written to the Minister for Social Services, Scott Morrison, about this issue and await his reply. Make no mistake, the Abbott government's cut to the Mentone Community Assistance and Information Bureau will hurt our community. It will hurt some of the most vulnerable members of the Mentone's community and surrounding suburbs and it will mean that the Mentone Community Assistance and Information Bureau will have to reduce services and turn away needy clients.

It must be hugely frustrating for the Mentone CAB located, as they are, just 50 metres from the office of the Assistant Minister for Social Services but, even with the evidence so obvious, they cannot make this the government see the value in fairly funding local providers of emergency relief. The CAB will press on, providing less and less as their funding is slashed. With reduced coordination it will possibly lose some of the great volunteers that make the CAB the priceless community organisation that it is and has been for many years. Ultimately, though, it is the neediest members of our community who will lose, because of the Abbott government's decision.

This decision is wrong. Cutting funding to providers of emergency relief—providers that already get by because of the time and often the money of volunteers—is wrong. I invite the Assistant Minister for Social Services, Senator Mitch Fifield, to make the 50-metre journey from his office to meet with me and the representatives of the Mentone Community Assistance and Information Bureau to see what they do and to see why it is so essential that the Abbott government reverse these cruel funding cuts to emergency relief providers. It is not just the Mentone CAB; it is other emergency relief providers right throughout South-East Melbourne that suffer from these cuts. (*Time expired*)