



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Queensland Country Women's Association**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 7 September 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 7 September 2015  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Prentice, Jane, MP

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

**Mrs PRENTICE** (Ryan) (10:35): The Queensland Country Women's Association needs no introduction. For more than 90 years they have operated constantly to support women and families, particularly when times are tough. They do not just pop up in extreme crisis situations but are there for the long run, ensuring families get the continuing support they need. A group of members from the local Moggill branch recently travelled by bus through drought stricken Western Queensland to offer financial assistance and support to families under stress in these tough times. The group travelled to Toowoomba, Miles, Chinchilla, Roma, Injune, Springsure, Emerald, Alpha, Barcaldine, Longreach, Winton, Blackall, Augathella, Charleville, Morven and Mitchell to meet with many individuals and groups and hold some small 'meet and greets' with rural families.

During this time, they distributed application forms for their Public Rural Crisis Fund. This fund was established by the QCWA to help women and their families in turmoil, whether from natural disaster or personal crisis, and it is built from public donations and fundraising by members. Money raised is used to provide struggling families with store credit, payment of bills and grocery store vouchers. The QCWA have the mantra 'Send money, not stuff' because they want to ensure that everyone in the town is supported and money stays in the local community. We must not forget that townspeople also suffer from the burden of drought. Simply donating goods or stuff puts a strain on the local business owners, who are desperately trying to keep afloat. When a drought stricken family is given a grocery voucher or store credit, it contributes to two families—the farmer and the local small business owner.

The Public Rural Crisis Fund is one of the few charities where 100 per cent of the money raised goes back into regional, rural and remote communities to help them recover, rebuild and get ahead. The QCWA President, Robyn McFarlane, says:

We ensure ... food is on the table, telephone bills are paid, and vehicles are registered.

Last year, the QCWA helped 330 families in need of assistance and this year they have already helped support 398 families. The QCWA have told me their need for support has dramatically increased in these heartbreaking times of drought and they desperately want to help women and their families and take some pressure off them. I have been told by one woman that it was wonderful just to be able to have the luxury of buying the brand of jam she used to.

A person or family who needs assistance can fill out an application form found on the QCWA website, where information on how to donate to the fund can also be found. All information is kept strictly confidential. With 85 per cent of Queensland in drought, it is really a critical situation in many of these towns. We should be doing what we can to support our families in rural communities. If you are thinking about where to go on your next trip, why not visit Western Queensland and help our rural communities in need of our support.