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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

ADJOURNMENT

Forde Electorate: International Women's Day

SPEECH

Thursday, 17 March 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Van Manen, Bert, MP

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Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (10:47): it is a pleasure to rise today to recognise the wonderful work of many terrific women in my community. With International Women's Day being celebrated last week, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the women in my electorate of Forde for their outstanding contribution to our local community. International Women's Day is about advocating gender equality around the world. Recognising the hard work, dedication and women in our local community is an important part of that process. To mark this special occasion, I called for nominations to hear about local women who are deserving of recognition. I wanted to hear about the unsung heroes, the quiet achievers who always put the needs of others ahead of their own and never seek praise in the process.

It was great to see nominations come in from all corners of my electorate, and it was a pleasure to present these nominees with a Forde Outstanding Women Award in celebration of International Women's Day. I would like to share with the House some of the tremendous work of the award recipients. Firstly, Linda Rowan was one very deserving recipient. Her 40 years of service to the region through the Beenleigh Senior Citizens Centre is to be commended. While Linda has now retired, she has taken up a voluntary role at the centre. It was a great pleasure to present the award to her the other day because, for once, I got one back on her!

On International Women's Day I also had the pleasure of attending a breakfast for Soroptimist International Beenleigh. That gave me the opportunity to present awards to their members Maree Lubach and Jackie Benton. Maree was nominated for her work with Soroptimist International as well as her outstanding efforts in establishing KinKare, which offers support to carers and grandparents. Jackie has made an enormous contribution to Soroptimist International, as well as a number of other organisations, but she was nominated for her support and work in forming Narcolepsy Support Australia.

My next stop on International Women's Day was Edens Landing State School, where I presented certificates to Kay Self and Karen Stoyko. The school would be lost without Kay and Karen. They both do tremendous work with their students, including running a successful student exchange program. I was very humbled that their recognition on this special day to celebrate women was met with a few tears of happiness, and it just goes to show that a little recognition can make a big difference to someone's day.

I would also like to congratulate Acting Sergeant Larissa Shaw, who was recognised for her outstanding work helping women and children impacted by domestic violence. Acting Sergeant Shaw founded the STARR program, which is now run in several districts around south-east Queensland and has provided exceptional support to women, children and families in the Logan area. Some other recipients of Forde's Outstanding Women Award included Nicole Hintz, who founded My Ormeau, the community organisation that runs a fantastic program of family friendly events. Coomera Springs State School principal Martine Gill was also recognised for her contribution, not only to the school but to the wider community. Sister Duo Madison and Taylor Burchnell were nominated for their commitment to their volunteer work, as well as their studies. These young women are absolutely outstanding role models for others in our community and are an example to the younger generation of what can be achieved when you put your mind to it. Debbie Nolan was recognised for her work with the north Gold Coast business networking lunches and annual expo. Both are outstanding events in the southern part of my electorate.

I have had the pleasure of meeting some tremendous women in my local community during International Women's Day and also in Queensland, where it was Queensland Women's Week. I thank each and every one of them for the outstanding work that they do. I hope I will have the opportunity to meet many more amazing local women in Forde who go above and beyond to help make their community a great place to live, and to be able to thank them on behalf of all of us.