

ZONTA CLUB OF CLARE & DISTRICTS

Mr BROCK (Frome) (15:52): Today I would like to talk about the recent celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the Zonta Club of Clare & Districts. This was held at Artisans Table at Clare just recently. The event acknowledged the hard work of establishing this club, which was started 13 years ago after a decision of the Zonta Club of Adelaide Torrens to birth another club at Clare. A task force was established and a guest speaker was chosen to speak to the group at Clare at the time. This was facilitated by Mrs Barbara Worley OAM, who visited Clare once a month for nearly three years to help the local ladies spread the word of Zonta and to encourage the development of a membership base for a local club in the region.

It took the local Clare ladies such a long time to get the required 20 members for a club formation. Along the way there were a few who may have lost interest and, in actual fact, did lose interest; however, the rest of the ladies kept regrouping. Eventually, on 2 May 2002, the women still involved signed up and the newly chartered Zonta Club of Clare & Districts was inducted, and this club became the youngest club in the district. This has since been eclipsed by the formation in 2011 of a new club in Hobart.

Over this decade, members have worked diligently in the community to deliver a number of very important projects. Some of those projects include bursaries to four regional high schools to help young women achieve positive educational and social outcomes; pamper packs containing lovely and useful toiletry items wrapped in gorgeous, fluffy towels and distributed through Uniting Care to local women in need in Clare; and the maintenance of a care cupboard at the Clare Hospital, which contains toiletries and a change of clothing for women hospitalised in an emergency. In this project the local Zonta club collaborated with the local Freemasons club of Clare to provide items for men hospitalised in an emergency.

The hospital care cupboard got a mention in state parliament when it was launched 10 years ago, and in 2010 the club was the runner-up in the Premier's awards for their school bursary initiative. Locally, the club regularly celebrates International Women's Day with a breakfast and has held White Ribbon Day events. The club also celebrates the strength, fortitude, vision and commitment of special women in the Clare community through its women's honour roll at the Zonta Garden at Clare's northern entrance. This garden was a gift to the club from the Clare and Gilbert Valleys some years ago and was dedicated to the local club by former mayor, Patricia Jacka OAM.

The club also holds an annual birthing kit assembly day and its other international support comes from contributions made through its fundraising efforts, with moneys sent to Zonta International towards programs such as prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and gender-based violence in Rwanda, Safe Cities for Women project in Guatemala City and El Salvador, and the elimination of obstetric fistula and the reduction of maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity in Libya.

This club has completed many worthwhile and challenging projects during the last ten years. However, I would also particularly acknowledge the three charter members who have ten years of unbroken service to this club: Debra MacKenzie, Bev Gum and Jillian Mill. The current president, Nan Berrett, although she was a foundation member, left for a small period, but has since rejoined and has now volunteered for a second term as president.

I feel privileged to have been part of this club's 10th birthday celebration and also the other events that I have been invited to by this club and attended. This club has continued to survive despite some challenging times, almost facing closure due to low member numbers, but is now vibrant and active, with a wonderful group of women who will continue to make a positive impact on our communities both locally and further afield. This club is to be commended for its courage and its dedication.

