

MIDLAS

Statement

HON LORNA HARPER (East Metropolitan) [6.31 pm]: This evening I rise because I would like to acknowledge and give a shout-out to a group I met with last week in Midland called Midlas. I owe a little apology to the people I met because I met them after I had been with Matthew Hughes, the member for Kalamunda, at Parkerville Primary School where we gave coffee to the parents and I might have had too much coffee because by the time I went to meet the group, I was bouncing off the walls. I am surprised they understood me because I was speaking so quickly the whole time and was really hyper. Quite a few people here would know about Midlas. It is an advocacy group that is all about building resilience in the north east of Perth, in the lovely eastern suburbs we all live in—not all of you, but which I and a few others are honoured to represent, the wonderful East Metropolitan Region.

Midlas has been around for 30 years. It is all about building resilience. Community organisations like Midlas are incredibly important to ensure that we support people throughout the challenges in their lives. Midlas benefits from some Department of Communities money, but that also presents challenges. The vision of Midlas is about building resilient communities and partnering with individuals and organisations to promote independent strength and wellbeing in our community through support, advocacy and education. The conversations I had were about not reinventing the wheel but about community organisations working in collaboration with each other to ensure that the whole community is being assisted. That is one of the things Midlas likes to do. The discussion was quite emotional because we ended up talking about the work that the solicitors at Midlas do. They go to the courts at the beginning of the week to assist people with restraining orders. Midlas has had to expand the number of duty lawyers it has because of that work. Midlas holds a legal advice clinic every Wednesday morning for family law and family violence matters. The legal services it provides include all sorts of property matters. Midlas deals with tenancies, as well as domestic violence et cetera. Midlas is there to support people in the community. The impact of the work of the duty lawyers has resulted in 75 per cent of its clients avoiding committing further acts of violence and has resulted in positive changes to their lives and wellbeing. The 75 per cent of people Midlas has helped also helps reduce the cost to the community in other areas. It is important to ensure that we keep supporting these organisations that are doing that.

Midlas supports all sorts of vulnerable people in the community through all types of challenges. It also provides a large disability advocacy service. Anyone unfortunate enough to have to access and apply for NDIS knows that it is unbelievably difficult. It is getting better, but it is unbelievably difficult to navigate the disability sector and NDIS funding. NDIS is not what was dreamed up by Bill Shorten all those years ago. We are all aware of that. Excuse the term, but it has been bastardised along the way. In my eyes, I feel that a lot of people are profiteering from supplying support services to people. This is mainly a federal issue but we talk about it because it concerns people in our communities.

Midlas supported 79 royal commission submissions looking into the violence against and neglect and exploitation of people with disability. Again, it is an essential service to assist people in our communities. Midlas also offers financial counselling services. It opened an office in Ellenbrook, which is really good because Ellenbrook is a vibrant, upcoming community. It is massive, and could do with more services like that.

I do not want to take up too much time, but I do want to thank the staff and people at Midlas. Let us make sure that we thank all these community organisations, shout out our support and keep pushing forward and assisting them with what they are trying to achieve in all areas, because by working together, we can reduce the stress on families and communities throughout the whole of Western Australia, not just in the eastern metro area.

House adjourned at 6.37 pm