

## **SHARE THE DIGNITY**

### *Statement*

**HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral)** [5.22 pm]: I rise to speak about some important work that is occurring in my electorate. It is led by Share the Dignity and its local “Sheroes”. Katie Gorzola and Nicole Dunlop are the key figures behind the charge in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. I have been meeting with Katie in particular to see how my office can help share the dignity with our less privileged constituents. Share the Dignity is an Australian charity that distributes sanitary items to homeless or at-risk women, or women experiencing domestic violence. It believes that all women matter, and all women deserve dignity and justice. The program is run entirely by volunteers. As I have said, Share the Dignity calls them “Sheroes”.

The organisation began when the founder, Rochelle Courtenay, read an article on the Mamamia website that revealed the difficulty homeless women face in managing their periods. Rochelle asked herself, like many other women, “Why has this never occurred to me before?”, and, as women do, did something about it. She put out a call for personal items to be donated to centres that would distribute them to women in need.

For me personally, I had a similar thought pattern. I have been very privileged in that not any of the women in my life have been unable to afford sanitary products. However, a few years ago, I heard about an incident that happened in Kalgoorlie, in my electorate. It was October 2015, and a woman was in desperate need of a tampon. Unfortunately, she had no money to spare to pay for this essential item that she needed, so she ended up stealing a box of tampons from a servo, valued at \$6.75. She was caught by the police, and fined \$500. Obviously on paper, this was a petty theft, and there are consequences for that, as she found out. However, anyone with some sense of humanity has to think about how embarrassing and humiliating this experience would have been for that woman. To rub salt into the wound, she was faced with having to pay a big fine even though she could not afford to buy tampons in the first place. Share the Dignity is trying to prevent the shame related to women needing sanitary products. Most people with a uterus do menstruate and sanitary products are absolutely essentials. My office in Kalgoorlie will be a collection point for the next big Share the Dignity drive. The “It’s in the Bag” drive will be held from 22 November until 7 December, ahead of the Christmas period.

Two other major Share the Dignity drives are held during the year—one in April and the other in August. Katie has shared with me her personal story about why she chose to start volunteering for Share the Dignity and I would like to share a few of her words with members now. She said, according to my notes —

I have been volunteering for Share the Dignity almost for a year now and started by spreading the word on local Facebook pages. During the April drive this year we had the most collection points ever in the Goldfields. I had posted on Facebook asking local businesses to become a collection point and had an amazing response. Since then, most of these became collection points in August this year.

I also contacted the Kalgoorlie Miner in April and the reporter (Tegan Guthrie) advised me that the last time Share the Dignity had an article was in 2016. Since then, I’ve contacted the Kalgoorlie Miner for each Dignity Drive this year and been in the newspaper to get the community to be more aware of us. I have also recently created the Facebook page for Share the Dignity Goldfields Region WA.

Jump on there and “like” the page —

I started volunteering because I wanted to give back to community somehow and wanted a charity that I connected with. It’s very sad but true that I’ve known a lot of friends and family who have been in domestic violence situations, and I wanted to help other women and girls.

There are some people in this world who really bring other women and girls down and I wanted to be one of the women that empower and help other women and girls. Share the Dignity also makes me feel like I’m contributing to help someone else’s life that might not be so great right now.

All the other Sheroes and Heroes are amazing and it feels like we are all doing this to make a difference and that it could make someone happy, and that is one of the best feelings in the world. ‘It’s in the bag’ is my favourite Dignity Drive as it is close to Christmas and people get very supportive in the festive spirit.

I would personally like to thank Katie, Nicole and all the Sheroes and Heroes who work with this amazing charity, Share the Dignity.

I would also like to ask members to get in touch with their local Share the Dignity team to see whether they are able to have a collection point in their electorate offices or help out in any way they can. For people in Kalgoorlie–Boulder, my office will be a drop-off point for donations. This is an amazing thing that is happening and I reckon the movement that Katie and Nicole have created in the goldfields is just beautiful. Thank you.