



### NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light): Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, this week is National Youth Week, so I would like to take the opportunity to talk about some of the young people in our community and some of the views they are expressing and some of their concerns they are sharing with me and other community leaders.

Last week I was able to convene one of my Youth Advisory Panel meetings. The Youth Advisory Panel is made up of young people from the local schools and also the local youth advisory committees. The Youth Advisory Panel, which I chair, comprises students from St Patrick's Technical College, Northern Adelaide Senior College, Mark Oliphant College, St Columba College, Trinity College, Gawler and District College, and Xavier College. It also has nominees from the Gawler and Playford youth advisory committees.

Nuriootpa High is also considering joining the panel. I am also hoping to extend an invitation to young people who are carers in the community because they have a range of different interests from other young people. Hopefully, the Barossa Carers and Disability Link group will be able to provide a young person to the panel.

Being of school age, of course, the students are accompanied by a teacher from their respective schools. Our first meeting, held last week, was essentially to set up an agenda for this year regarding issues they wish to discuss and also any activities they wish to be involved in.

Some of the issues they have raised will be discussed over the coming months. The first issue that young people raised as a priority was about respectful relationships. They are very keen to have a discussion about what it means to have a respectful relationship and also what they can do in their school communities and the

community at large to change behaviour so that we do see more respectful relationships between individuals—and this is right across the board—in other words, treating the next person alongside you with the appropriate dignity. It deals with things like sexual harassment, homophobia, racism and bullying—the whole gamut of behaviours which generally should be considered as unacceptable and which diminish the dignity of others in our community.

More importantly, young people are really keen to understand the values behind these behaviours. What actually causes the behaviour? You can call behaviour out, but you do not change it until you understand why people behave like that. We will be inviting a guest speaker to our next meeting to talk about what sort of values lead to this sort of behaviour and what do we do in our schools and our community to change that. They are very keen to tackle that issue. Also, at a future meeting we will be tackling the very important issue around mental health and young people.

Certainly young people express a great deal of concern about their peers who are dealing with a lot of mental health issues in the community, and certainly it has been made worse by COVID, but those underlying trends were already there. The one issue that comes up time and again is getting access to mental health services. That is a huge issue in our community.

We have a local resident doctor who also specialises in mental health who has gone out to campaign strongly to get more mental health services available in our community. When you are told that a psychologist or a doctor is not available for four or five months before you can see them once, that is like a lifetime. It can be the difference between life and death for some young people—not only young people but also people who need help.

Young people are also keen to look at sustainability and how they can address sustainability and reduce waste in their schools as their contribution towards climate change. I am looking forward to that discussion as well. There was discussion also about particular mental health issues that defence families deal with. That is a particular issue that hopefully will be addressed by a royal commission.

Today is also St Florian's Day or International Firefighters' Day, and I would like to acknowledge those young cadets who recently joined the Country Fire Service in the Dalkeith brigade. Last night, I had the pleasure of meeting these young cadets. They are very keen young people, all are of school age and most of them are still at school. They put up their hand to say that they will be part of their community and part of the effort in our community to keep our community safe, so I would like to say a big thank you to these young people who are actually serving the community and keeping it safe

through their work as a CFS volunteer.  
I would also like to thank those  
students who are part of my Youth  
Advisory Panel.