




Speech by

Robert Cavallucci

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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YOUNGCARE; CASPARI, MS S

 **Mr CAVALLUCCI** (Brisbane Central—LNP) (3.12 pm): I rise to speak about Youngcare Australia, a brilliant organisation whose headquarters is based in my electorate. Importantly, I rise to speak about an inspirational individual who was the heart and soul of this organisation, Shevaune Caspary, who tragically passed away last week at the mere age of 40.

Youngcare, established in 2005, was inspired by Shevaune and her husband, David Conry, in their search for a relevant and dignified care facility for young people with high needs. The fact was that they could not find one. Shevaune was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at just 26 years of age, and in 2005, despite the best efforts, her care needs reached a point where it was not possible for her to remain at home. Shevaune and her loved ones discovered that her only option was to live in aged care. It was devastating news for Shevaune, who, although she could make jokes about the circumstances, knew that she had discovered a great modern social flaw—that there was a desperate lack of full-time care and housing options for young people across the nation.

But she and her loved ones did not give in. David, along with Matt Lawson, Simon Lockyer and Nick Bonifant, co-founded Youngcare and vowed to change the way young people are cared for. Firstly they used their networks of friends and supporters, and after some hard work thousands began seeking information. Businesses, government and the wider community began contributing, and the first-ever Youngcare apartments were constructed and opened in 2007.

Shevaune moved into her very own Youngcare apartment, along with 15 others. Her new home provided all the care and support required for her young life to be lived in a dignified and more appropriate manner. It was the beginning of a movement to provide such support Australia-wide.

There are currently over 7,000 young Australians with high care needs living in aged care because there are few alternatives. A further 700,000 young people are currently cared for at home by family or friends. All young people deserve to live young lives. Youngcare is committed to raising awareness of the issue across the nation so that it can drive change and create real choices for young Australians with high care needs and their families.

Addressing these issues head-on is a task that Youngcare and their dedicated staff work at every day. Their work includes raising awareness and securing funding support; facilitating the Youngcare Connect support hotline; lobbying government to drive policy change; providing at-home-care grants so that young people can be cared for at home; undertaking research; and, most importantly, continuing to build more Youngcare housing.

These are big tasks, and Youngcare needs our ongoing support. For Youngcare, Shevaune will continue to inspire the work. For many Queenslanders, she will now be remembered as a leader in innovative thought and motivation for young people with high care needs. Shevaune, David and Youngcare have shown us the way. They have provided the spark of hope and the practical hard work needed to forge a new path for dealing with those in need. I commend their efforts and I beseech from all members ongoing support for Youngcare Australia. Finally, I offer my sincere condolences to Shevaune's family.