



Amanda Rishworth MP

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South Adelaide Football Club's 'Southern Man Made'

I rise to commend an initiative at the South Adelaide Football Club, otherwise known as the Panthers. The program is titled the 'Southern Man Made'. The South Adelaide Football Club has been exploring many ways in which it can engage with and make a positive contribution to the local community through its football. I was very pleased to attend the program, which was launched on 28 April. This program really is about connecting elite football players with young men in the local community. This program is about helping young people to improve their individual character and their lives. It has been supported by the Hickinbotham Group, a proud supporter of the South Adelaide Football Club, and by the Hackham West Community Centre. They have all come together with the South Adelaide Football Club to really make a difference in the lives of local teenage boys.

The Southern Man Made program will see senior Panthers players mentoring local youth, giving them tips on healthy eating, life skills, gym work and, of course, playing footy. This is a way to engage the young men of the south, to help them through difficult times. Often these young men do not have male role models in their lives and this program will go a long way towards providing those. It will see boys without father figures team up with successful professional footballers from the local area who can guide them through some of the hard bits of being a teenager. As well, they will give specific advice on how to eat better, train better and live better.

The program could not have happened without the support of the Hickinbotham Group. Local businessman Alan Hickinbotham should be commended for his commitment to the community as well as his commitment to the local club. The program has partnered with the Hackham West Community Centre, which for over 26 years has provided a space for local residents to meet to improve their health and welfare.

At the launch, I was able to meet some of the young people who have been selected for the program. They had a real sense of anticipation. They will not only be given advice about football; after the launch they went to play tenpin bowling. So it really is about connecting, about giving young men in the southern suburbs some real opportunities to follow positive role models and to have a whole lot of fun.

The program includes fortnightly life skills lessons on topics ranging from decision-making skills to antiharassment and bullying training, and information on alcohol, drugs and the consequences of violence. After the skills lessons, the boys go to the gym with their mentors and attend some of the senior training sessions. Chris Brooks from Christies Beach High has been buddied with Dylan Williams—this is one of the testimonies—a 21-year-old Panther. He said he cannot wait to get to the gym with Mr Williams or to have a kick with him. I am sure that Mr Williams and the rest of the volunteer mentors are looking forward to this exceptional leadership opportunity. While they put a whole lot of effort and enthusiasm into their football, I believe they will also meet this challenge with great enthusiasm.

I know that this program will be good for the boys involved and invaluable expenditure for the men who are performing the mentor role. This is a unique leadership opportunity for these young men and I do not doubt that every one of them will rise to the occasion. This is a very exciting initiative. I think the South Adelaide Football Club should be commended for this program. The final thing I have to say is to repeat a comment which is regularly made by the Premier for South Australia—‘Go Panthers’.