

## The Cottage – Opening of Lavender Cottage, Mt. Barker South Australia

Today, as Patron for the Love, Hope & Gratitude Foundation and as a White Ribbon Ambassador, I had the honour to help launch the opening of Lavender Cottage - A Community Cottage - in Mt Barker for homeless people and people escaping violence in their home.

How does one capture the 'worth' of this venture in words? As is my practice, I once again turned to philosophy and the concept that one can find meaning in the word itself, and that I did:

### The COTTAGE

C is for Comforting and caring – this cottage will provide comfort to the homeless and those impacted by domestic and family violence. It will also be symbolic that people in Mt Barker care as they should because homelessness, domestic and family violence are community problems that must be tackled by all. Victims should not be left to alone deal with the victimisation and its causes.

O is for Opportunity – this cottage will be a safe place for those in need to seek refuge and to acquire help, if they choose. Personal safety should be a paramount consideration in how we respond to those who become victims of violence. This cottage represents the strength of victims such as Glyn Scott to turn their pain and anguish into activism. It also affords others opportunities to learn from victims.

T is for Terror – that is the terror too many women face daily in their homes and workplaces; not the terror of terrorism that features often in the media. Indicative of the terror and horror and domestic violence, for instance, is the stark fact that in Australia one woman on a average is killed by someone known to them per week and about 40% of women 15 yrs plus are the victim of violence at least once in their lifetime (and that represents those who are willing to disclose they were victims).

T (that is the second T in contrast) is for Tender – that, on the one hand, has happened to create this place. Volunteers and sponsors have shown kindness and sensitivity in making this place a reality. People have tended to the garden, so it is beautiful in flower; people have ensured the inside if fit for purpose. T for tender also reminds us that children - young, inexperienced, or vulnerable – are victims of homelessness, and violence in the home.

A is for Approachable – this cottage will be a place for the homeless, for victims and for other vulnerable people to turn to you for help; and such help will come from a mix of people – some victim-survivors, some concerned citizens, some who want for our communities to be free of homelessness and of violence (which can be a cause of homelessness).

G is for goal – the goal of those behind this place and hopefully all of us is to eradicate homelessness and to eliminate violence against women, as well as in the meantime to prevent further victimisation.

E is for Encourage – this place may serve to encourage those who need help to seek it, in the knowledge that it will come with love and hope. That this place has arisen as a community response to community problems should (hopefully) encourage others to help.

This cottage came from a dream (Glyn Scott's dream that others share) – it should encourage us to dare to dream of a future for all grounded on social values that are intolerant of discrimination and violence, such as fairness, equality and equity.

Thank you Glyn. Thank you volunteers, sponsors and anyone who has made this cottage a happening place.

{PS - For those present I offer an apology if my words above are not exact as said. M}

To read more about Glyn's story see visit <http://www.glynscott.com.au/>