

## HANSARD

13 AUGUST 2009

### TAX HELP CENTRE

*Statement by Member for Riverton*

**DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton)** [12.51 pm]: In these taxing times I am pleased to advise that I am operating a free Tax Help Centre from my electorate office in Riverton. The program is a community service run in conjunction with the Australian Taxation Office. It allows members of the public on low incomes of below \$40 000 a year to contact my office to organise a confidential one-on-one appointment with a trained Tax Help volunteer who can assist them with their tax.

The Tax Help Centre is suitable for people with disabilities, people from non-English speaking or Indigenous backgrounds, seniors or young people who are completing their taxation returns for the first time. The program, which has been run for more than 20 years, operates from 1 July through to October, and more than 70 000 people across Australia will utilise it through the year.

Mr Osmund Perera is the Tax Help volunteer who operates out of my office on Tuesdays. He has been a volunteer for the past five years and is currently seeing about five people twice a week.

Tax Help volunteers like Mr Perera can provide advice on whether people need to lodge a taxation return or on how to claim family tax benefits, refund for imputation credits or the baby bonus. Volunteers cannot assist with business tax returns, partnerships and trust matters, capital gains or rental properties.

The Tax Help program is an extremely worthwhile community project that has a large amount of and growing demand. I encourage other members of Parliament to consider providing this free service next year by contacting the ATO.