



Speech by

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Hansard 18 November 1998

INTEGRATION THROUGH RECREATION

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (12 a.m.): Today I bring to the attention of the House Townsville's Integration Through Recreation. Into Rec, as it is known, is a community-based benevolent recreation organisation which encourages individuals with a disability to become involved in community life through recreation and leisure. Into Rec is all about integration and inclusion, which is a new area of very sound philosophy. This philosophy is about developing meaningful relationships and finding a role for people with a disability.

Historically, disability has not been valued in our society and people with a disability have always been on the receiving end of services. All people need to interact and contribute to live meaningful lives, and this usually involves significant two-way relationships. It is only more recently that people with a disability have become more involved in community life, with carers providing much of the stimulus and entertainment.

Into Rec takes this concept further, using recreation as the medium for making friends. Opportunities are provided to meet people and socialise in integrated settings within the wider community, and integration naturally occurs when a person is included as a participating community member. In other words, Into Rec helps to provide the best service for each individual and then, as a valued member of the neighbourhood team or club, these people have access to and take part in social activities.

The Rising Sun branch of the ALP, of which I am a member, is an example of a community organisation which values all participants. Into Rec liaised with our branch and assisted a person with a disability in his desire to become a valued branch member. Because of its success, support by Into Rec staff is no longer required and this particular member gets all necessary support from other branch members. This is what inclusive living is all about. It is about welcoming people in, accepting their differences and finding valued roles for them. This encourages interdependence by recognising the contribution and gifts others bring. Into Rec encourages the creation of inclusive communities—communities that welcome diversity and are flexible and creative enough to cater for such diversity.

People with a disability learn from their involvement in community life. It gives them a sense of belonging. Support provisions are shared, providing a balanced lifestyle for all family members. If we were to imagine our lives without community, we would have to imagine a life without the opportunity to make friends and form relationships with people of varied cultures, abilities, interests and age groups.

Recreation is a great medium for making friends, and Into Rec must be commended for its inclusive and integrated philosophy which provides people with a disability the opportunity to live a full, collective community life. I will continue to support Into Rec in its endeavours.
