



Speech by

Mrs E. CUNNINGHAM

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Hansard 17 September 1998

MR P. RAFTER; STARLIGHT FOUNDATION

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—IND) (10.36 p.m.): Tonight seems to be the night for acknowledging sportspeople. I wish to acknowledge a Queensland sportsman not only for his sporting prowess but also for his generosity of spirit. Pat Rafter arrived back in Brisbane yesterday and today handed over a \$300,000 cheque to the Starlight Foundation.

Families in my electorate and many other electorates have benefited from the programs of the Starlight Foundation, which is an international non-profit organisation that commenced in 1998 in Australia. It is run by a group of prominent Sydney businessmen and women. The foundation helps to brighten the lives of seriously ill children from ages four through to 18. Starlight grants wishes to seriously ill children, the most common illnesses being leukaemia, cancer, kidney disease, cystic fibrosis, AIDS, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida and cerebral palsy. A very important aspect is that Starlight encourages the entire family to be part of the wish and often seeks to accommodate the special needs of the family to enhance the experience. The ill child goes away with its family unit, and all of them not only enjoy the special wish but also a respite from the stresses and strains of living at home.

We saw Pat Rafter's skills demonstrated in the US Open, when he took out his second title. It is important that this Chamber recognises his generosity of spirit, which is something that is often replicated in other Australians. We need to highlight and recognise his donation, because his generosity has ensured that a recreation room for seriously ill patients can be constructed at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. When we read about the benefits that such facilities have had in other States, we realise that the relief that it offers to the children is difficult to quantify. I congratulate Pat Rafter.

Time expired.
