



Speech by

MIKE REYNOLDS

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Hansard 22 October 1998

MISS E. CHEERS

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (10.22 a.m.): Townsville has a proud record of cultural and community development. This is exemplified across the city's range of endeavours in the performing and visual arts. I would like to inform the House today that Townsville ballerina Emma Cheers has come home as the youngest member of the Queensland Ballet. The 17-year-old will make her stage debut at the Townsville Civic Theatre on Saturday amongst a cast of 22 in the romantic 1841 Paris Opera ballet *Giselle*, which is touring north Queensland.

Emma Cheers, who has spent two years in Melbourne at the highly acclaimed Christine Walsh Dance Centre, will be watched on stage by her parents, Judy and Brian, who have recently moved to Adelaide. The couple has travelled from Adelaide for the show and will be joined by Emma Cheers' former mentor and Royal Ballet of London dancer Robyn Croft in the crowd. Robyn Croft, who grew up in Townsville, is internationally acclaimed in her own right. Ms Croft said yesterday, "I am proud of her", as her brightest student posed for the camera. Ms Croft said, "She has been dedicated throughout. She would get up at 6 a.m. for lessons and that's why she is where she is today." The little dancer, who stands at 162 centimetres but weighs in at just 46 kilograms, is one of the 11 village girls in the ballet.

Emma Cheers gained a berth in the exclusive Queensland Ballet line-up after auditions in Brisbane more than a month ago. And now, under the watchful eye of ballet guru Francois Klaus, Emma is making her professional stage debut in her home city. Yesterday, she returned to the dressing rooms where she once prepared for her award-winning eisteddfod performances.

Emma Cheers joins a host of home-grown talent on the national and international dance stage, including renowned choreographer Natalie Weir and former Australian Ballet member Janette Mulligan and, of course, Robyn Croft. Saturday night at the Townsville Civic Theatre will be a proud occasion for Emma Cheers and her parents, Judy and Brian, and her mentor Robyn Croft. It will also be a very proud occasion for all the people of Townsville.
