



Speech by

Mr TIM MULHERIN

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Hansard 20 October 1998

MACKAY REGION APPRENTICESHIP EMPLOYMENT LIMITED

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (7.26 p.m.): On Monday, 12 October I had the privilege, along with my parliamentary colleague the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, Paul Braddy, to attend the 13th Annual Awards Night of Mackay Region Apprenticeship Employment Limited, or MRAEL as it is commonly known. In addition to the pleasant duty of presenting the various awards, the Honourable Minister also inspected and officially opened MRAEL's new skills centre. Built totally by supervised apprentices at a cost of \$1.8m, the skills centre includes a training kitchen, bar and restaurant for the hospitality industry as well as a computer room and general training rooms.

When MRAEL first hosted an awards presentation in 1986, two excellence awards were presented and host employers had been found for 19 apprentices. This year, 23 awards were presented in recognition of the company's 670 apprentices and trainees working throughout the Mackay region in over 40 different trades with 635 host employers. A group of Mackay people with limited financial support and a loan of \$6,000 from the ACTU Lend Lease Foundation established MRAEL in October 1985 in order to fulfil a need to provide a better skilled work force. Through the indenturing and training of apprentices and trainees by positioning them with host employers, MRAEL is able to place young Queenslanders in employment and train them for the future.

The excellence of training provided by MRAEL under the leadership of Peter Broadhurst, Kim Wilson, Bill Firth and the board of directors was recognised in 1995 when MRAEL was named Ansett Australia Employer of the Year (Training Agency). As well as the 670 young apprentices and trainees employed, MRAEL itself employs 63 staff in seven offices in the Mackay and Townsville region and has a turnover of \$12m.

The importance of the many local sponsors of MRAEL's awards presentation cannot be underestimated. All are essential to the continuing recognition of young apprentices. Special mention must be made of the sponsorship by Northern Building Society of the Apprentice of the Year Award. The Northern Building Society has contributed sponsorship since the first awards night in 1986. That is 13 years of continuous sponsorship. I am also proud to be a sponsor of MRAEL's awards with the Tim Mulherin shield for the best trainer, being won this year by an old school mate, Kerry Woodman of Woodman's Mitre 10, a local hardware and building supplier. This year's Apprentice of the Year is 23-year-old Nathan Welch. Nathan, who obtained an OP of 1 in Year 12, studied law for a year but became disenchanted with that profession and decided he would prefer to work with his hands. Nathan is a diesel fitter with Carlisle Tractors in Mackay. He has just finished his four-year apprenticeship and has been offered a permanent position with Carlisle Tractors. His supervisor has stated that he was an outstanding apprentice, the best he had had in 30 years. Nathan is the son of well-known Mackay residents Bill and Toni Welch. Bill is an organiser with the Metal Workers Union and a member of the ACTU Mackay Provincial Council. I am sure that he and Toni are proud not only of their son but also of the fact that it was a loan from the ACTU Lend Lease Foundation that helped with the initial establishment of MRAEL. I would like to offer Nathan my sincere congratulations on his wonderful achievement. My congratulations also go to the executive and board members of MRAEL for the dedication and commitment they have shown and continue to show to the future of the youth of the Mackay region.
