



Speech by

**Mrs D. PRATT**

**MEMBER FOR BARAMBAH**

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Hansard 27 October 1999

#### **SOUTH BURNETT REGIONAL CADET UNIT**

**Mrs PRATT** (Barambah—IND) (11.10 p.m.): The member for Barron River wants to close down a tavern but she cannot support a few hours of closing of licensed premises on Anzac Day eve. She has me a little confused as to where her priorities lie.

I would like to bring to the attention of the House the wonderful example of the youth of the South Burnett Regional Cadet Unit. These young men and women are aged between 12 and a half and 18 years. The unit was formed as a result of the persistence of 2nd Lieutenant Derek Charlwood and 2nd Lieutenant King with the objective of better equipping young people for community life by fostering initiative, discipline, leadership and loyalty. I was proud to be the reviewing officer at the cadets' inception.

On the first occasion of my being the reviewing officer, I noted that there were many pairs of sneakers lined up amongst the few pairs of boots which constitute part of their uniform. Very few of the cadets were fully kitted out. Although the unit had been formed for only a very short time, the cadets marched with pride, although slightly shy and very nervous and often out of step.

On that day, I presented them with their unit banner and their chests swelled with pride as it was raised. Their training is modelled along military lines but is strictly of a non-warlike manner, although many aspects of military service are included. The training includes field craft, navigation, ceremonial parade, man management, leadership, first aid, radio communications and survival skills.

The cadets also receive training in the use, care and maintenance of military weapons, although no live firing rifles are issued to cadet units. Their training also includes abseiling, canoeing and other adventurous activities.

Recently, the cadets marched to mark their first anniversary and I was again invited to be the reviewing officer. Twelve months has made a great difference to these young men and women. They stood very tall in their uniforms—uniforms which they worked very hard to obtain. Over this 12-month period I witnessed a transformation in these young men and women. They had developed a confidence and self-assurance that I do not see in many adults. There was not one cadet who could not look me or any other adult in the eye. The cadets had also developed a caring attitude to their peers and a respectful manner to all the adults gathered for the celebrations.

The pride of the parents of these cadets was evident. The change in some of the so-called problem children caused their parents to cry. In a very short 12 months this cadet unit has won the hearts of the communities involved, and with that support the unit has flourished. The Wondai town band, which includes the mayor, played while the cadets marched proudly around the square. One thing I did notice was the respect that the cadets received from the younger children. All the younger children—brothers and sisters and those who simply came to have a look and have a bit of fun—wanted to join the unit when they were old enough. I congratulate the youth of the South Burnett Regional Cadet Unit. I wanted their efforts recorded in Hansard.

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