



Speech by

**Dr LESLEY CLARK**

**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Hansard 9 November 1999

#### **LAUNCH OF SIR BOB**

**Dr CLARK** (Barron River—ALP) (7.20 p.m.) Last weekend, it was my pleasant duty to represent the Minister for Emergency Services, Merri Rose, at the commissioning and launch of Sir Bob, the new vessel of the Cairns Volunteer Coastguard, at the Yorkey's Knob marina. I take this opportunity to put on the record my congratulations and appreciation to all those members of the Cairns flotilla, currently under the command of Lucille Jackley, who worked so hard over so many years to raise the \$750,000 necessary to build this magnificent vessel. Thanks too, Lucille, for the beautiful framed photographs of the Sir Bob presented to me and Minister Rose. Mine will be hanging in my new electorate office. Today, the Minister was just delighted with her photograph and will be displaying it in her ministerial office.

Although the Government contributed some \$100,000 towards the cost of Sir Bob, the launch on Sunday was the culmination of a genuine community venture. The Cairns City Council contributed \$75,000. In fact, Mayor Tom Pyne also contributed by another means, namely funds from the previous coastguard vessel, named the Tom Pyne, which was sold and is now cruising the waters of the Whitsundays. Tom may even find himself relaxing on the same vessel when he retires next March.

Businesses and individuals in Cairns have also given unstintingly, but in particular I would like to acknowledge the generosity of Sir Robert Norman and his wife Betty, who donated \$50,000. Bob and Betty have been magnificent benefactors to the Cairns community, contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars over many years towards a range of projects and organisations. Their generosity in particular towards the Cairns campus of the James Cook University and the Cairns Regional Art Gallery have been magnificent and are just two examples of their contributions to the Cairns community.

The launch of the Sir Bob was Lady Norman's last official function. Sadly, she is no longer well enough to continue her high level of involvement in public affairs. Bob and Betty are a devoted couple, and Bob will now be dedicating himself to caring for his wife in the Woodwood Retirement Village where they now live. On behalf of the Cairns community: thank you, Betty, your portrait in the Cairns Regional Gallery is a permanent reminder of your contributions to our community.

Let me return to the Coastguard and all those volunteers who underpin its operation. Volunteerism is something that many people take for granted, which is easy to do because our volunteers are always ready, willing and able to help. Sometimes circumstances require volunteers to put their own lives on the line to save others. For Coastguard volunteers the job may be as simple as helping a boatie who has run out of fuel on a fishing trip or suffered mechanical failure. It might be as difficult and as dangerous as putting to sea in atrocious conditions to effect a rescue or to assist in searching for missing vessels. I pay tribute to all those fantastic volunteers for their countless hours of work and sacrifice.

Cairns is unique in so far as we have a particular collaboration between the Coastguard and the Cairns Marine Radio Club. This particular collaboration is the result of the establishment many years ago of the Cairns Marine Radio Club to provide for the safety of those at sea. It has continued as an organisation that in the night hours is ready and able to receive distress signals from boats at sea. It has been instrumental in effecting many rescues in the Cairns area.

It was pleasing that Merri Rose came to Cairns two weeks ago to present a plaque in recognition and appreciation of the work of the Cairns Marine Radio Club. I would like to acknowledge

the contribution made by that club. I congratulate particularly Brian Swinton, its president, and Dottie, the person who puts in all those night-watch hours in her small caravan at the club's headquarters. It is the dedication of people such as Brian and Dottie in that club that has ensured for so many years that people on the water at night around Cairns know that they are safe. They will be able to play their role in alerting the Coastguard who will be able to set to sea in the magnificent Sir Bob to ensure that people on the reef waters who are taking part in tourism and recreational fishing know that they have another vessel which is ready at hand to ensure their safety.

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