



Speech by

Mr T. SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE

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QUEENSLAND ROSE OF TRALEE

Mr SULLIVAN (ChermSIDE—ALP) (11.23 p.m.): The influence of the Irish people has spread throughout the Western World. As a result of the potato famines and other troubles, the Irish settled in large numbers in many countries. Australia became a favoured destination for Irish settlers, and our nation is all the richer for their coming.

For the last 40 years, the great Irish Diaspora have come together in the city of Tralee, County Kerry to celebrate their Irishness in a celebration called the Rose of Tralee International Festival. This festival is an occasion for Irish communities from around the globe to link up and share their common heritage. The Rose of Tralee is a contest for girls of Irish birth or ancestry, aged 18 to 25 years. They are judged not on looks alone, but more on personality, poise, charm, sincerity and the ability to represent their home country in Ireland and to represent Ireland in their home country.

For 10 days in August, more than 300,000 visitors from all over the world will gather in Tralee for one of Europe's most popular festivals. Entrants from Canada, the USA, Europe, the Middle East, Japan, New Zealand, Great Britain, Ireland and Australia will gather in the Tralee Festival Dome. Over two nights, the "Roses" will be presented for judging, which will be broadcast live to tens of millions of homes in western Europe.

Queensland will be represented in Tralee by the 1999 Rose, Angela Martin, who was selected at the 12th Queensland Rose of Tralee Quest last Saturday evening, 5 June. I had the privilege not only of representing the Premier, Peter Beattie, at the quest, but also of announcing the winner to the hundreds of supporters who gathered for the celebration, and I table a copy of the program. It is appropriate that in this House we place on record our thanks for those who helped organise this wonderfully colourful function.

The Queensland Irish Association, under the guidance of President Pat Brennan and his directors, have consolidated the QIA as one of Queensland's most popular and friendly clubs. Through prudent financial management and years of hard work, QIA members have made Tara House a great place to gather for the one third of Queenslanders who are Irish and the two-thirds who wish they were.

It was at Tara House that committee convenor Noela McCormack and her committee members—Chris McGirl, Mary Woodley, Margaret Stacey, Janis Flanagan, Mary Casey, Maureen O'Reilly, Lorraine Hardin, Alexis Wavell-Smith, Kathleen O'Malley, Susan McLean, Pauline Donegan, Janet Phillips, Samantha Andrew and Angela Crealey—organised the 1999 Rose of Tralee selection. Master of Ceremonies, Jim Morrissey, and interviewer, Laurie Sheehan, helped create a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere which allowed those present to get to know and judge the 14 entrants. Thanks are due also to judges Carmel Mulherin, Marilyn Mackintosh, Berenice Atherton, Eleanor Davidson, Alan Aubrey and Dianne Mitchell, and to the many sponsors who supported the quest.

The 1998 Queensland Rose, Maria Crealey, in the great tradition of former Roses, was a magnificent ambassador for our State. Through her calm and friendly approach, she was also a great help to this year's entrants. Queensland will have a special place in Tralee this year because the QIA Pipes & Drums Band will lead the parade through the streets of Tralee. This will give Queensland massive exposure to millions of viewers because of this honour.

The Queensland Rose of Tralee committee members have been working with the Department of Tourism and the Department of State Development to help promote our State through the international festival. I have been in contact with the office of Queensland's Agent-General in London, and will be phoning Dermot McManus after the House rises tonight to see what support can be given to the Queensland contingent. I thank the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for State Development for the assistance their departments are providing to the Queensland committee, who are prepared to work so hard for this State.

All in all, the Queensland Rose of Tralee Quest has been a great success and will reach even greater heights in Tralee later this year. It is great to be Irish at any time, but particularly when the Queensland Rose of Tralee Quest is being held. I pass on my congratulations to all QIA members and their supporters. I am proud to be part of their celebration.
