



Speech by

Mr TIM MULHERIN

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Hansard 22 July 1999

ST MARY'S SCHOOL; 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (7.10 p.m.): I had the honour of attending the 75th anniversary celebration of St Mary's School in South Mackay over the May Day long weekend. In this day and age, it is an achievement for anything, whether it be a business, a school community or a sporting club to be still in existence 75 years after it started. I am very proud to say that not only is it still in existence but it is still flourishing. This, of course, stems from the magnificent foundations of Catholic education enshrined by the Sisters of Mercy in 1924 under the leadership of Sister Mary Dympna O'Reilly and Sister Mary Bernard Daly and carried on in the same traditions since then.

In 1923, when times were not good, Father Mulcahy purchased land for the church and school in Juliet Street, South Mackay. This was a bold venture, but warmly endorsed by the Catholic families of South Mackay who strongly supported and worked hard for this bold initiative. The parish families were spearheaded by Mr and Mrs Jack Casey, the parents of my predecessor, Edmund Casey, a well-known former student, and well supported by early South Mackay residents like the Ryan, McFarlane, Power, Maher, Daley, Curtin, O'Gorman, Smith, Sullivan, Kelly, Griffin, O'Sullivan, Podosky and Kemp families. Fortunately, staunch support given by parents and the religious in the early days never lost momentum. Each succeeding generation of parents and religious carried the baton of responsibility with great pride.

The teachings and values instilled in the pupils of St Mary's by the Sisters of Mercy and lay teachers over the years has had a profound affect throughout the district of Mackay, the State of Queensland and, indeed, throughout Australia. Just as an aside, St Mary's School and parish community have been immortalised in song by a well known St Mary's old boy, Graeme Connors, in his song St Mary's Fair.

As an old boy of the school, I personally owe the Sisters and the parish of St Mary's a great debt of gratitude and I have enormous pleasure in congratulating them on their milestone, which I place on record in this House.

I would also like to congratulate the parish priest, Father Terry Stallard, Mr Brendan Stockall, the current principal, the staff of the school, Mrs Bernice Wright, Rod Manning and Basil Graham who compiled and wrote a book on the history of the school and to the organising committee for organising the celebrations which were enjoyed immensely by past and present students and their families and friends. On Friday, 30 July, I look forward to participating in the placing of a time capsule in the school grounds to commemorate this important event in the life of St Mary's.

Time expired.
