



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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GUMBA GUMBA YOUTH PROGRAM

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (7.10 p.m.): This week, when we have seen some 200,000 people walk across the Sydney Harbour Bridge as a symbol of their tremendous support for reconciliation, I am pleased to report on a very much smaller event that has recently taken place in Cairns but which is nonetheless very important. The Gumba Gumba elders hosted their graduation night for a number of young people with whom they have trialled an innovative program.

For these young people, many of whom have had difficulty with school attendance and school performance and who come from families that are not fortunate, the elders have offered, out of school hours, a program of mentoring as it were. They have provided these young people with training in culturally appropriate skills and with information in recreational activities. They have taught them communications and they have taught them teamwork. They have given them responsibility and a chance to really blossom and discover their talents. At the same time, underlying all of this, the elders have provided for these young people examples of the best modern indigenous values and attitudes available. This program was supported by the Federal Government in a modest financial way. I give my congratulations to it for supporting this initiative.

There is no doubt that the program has been successful. Hopefully it can be continued and expanded. What was most important was seeing these young people, people who have already had difficulties in their young lives, showing self-confidence and pride and having developed a positive image of their own capabilities for the future. I offer my sincere congratulations to the directors and the staff of Gumba Gumba, in particular to chairlady Mrs Maureen Williams and to executive officer Mr Bob Colless. They do indigenous people and indigenous youth proud and provide the way for a positive future for indigenous young people.
