



Speech by

STEVEN RODGERS

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Hansard 5 December 2001

ON PLANTATION CREEK

Mr RODGERS (Burdekin—ALP) (7.23 p.m.): I wish to highlight an event that took place in my electorate. Last Saturday, my daughter Samantha and I attended the launch of a book called *On Plantation Creek*, a community history of the Australian South Sea Islanders in the Burdekin shire. The book was written by Lincoln Hayes in association with Burdekin's Australian South Sea Islander community and the Burdekin Shire Council. This publication was made possible by funding and support from the Queensland government's Queensland Community Cultural Heritage Incentive Program, administered through the Environmental Protection Agency.

The person who launched that book in the Burdekin Shire Theatre was none other than the great Queensland Rugby League international Mal Meninga. At the launch of the book Mal said—

It certainly gives me some sense of belonging to do this sort of work and it certainly gives the community a sense of belonging to have a book like this. I believe everybody needs to have some idea of their own history to be able to empower them.

That is very true, and the South Sea Islander community in the Burdekin is very strong in that respect. I have a copy of *On Plantation Creek* that I would like to donate to the Parliamentary Library tomorrow. The islander community with which I have been associated via sport and other organisations in the community is very strong. They add strength to the Burdekin community. In the early days, the Kanakas were the main strength of the sugar industry. They carried the industry on and helped it progress to what it is today. Recognition of their work and toil in that industry is well overdue. This book goes part of the way to highlighting that and to showing how islander people in the community have progressed and made the Burdekin what it is—a very strong, vibrant, multicultural community, and one that I am very proud to represent.
