



Speech by

STUART COPELAND

MEMBER FOR CUNNINGHAM

Hansard 11 December 2001

BLITZ MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT FESTIVAL

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (9.57 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to promote a wonderful new initiative in my electorate that is seeking to provide regional youth with an opportunity to experience first-class live music and entertainment right at their doorstep. A group of enthusiastic people from the Spring Street Church in Toowoomba have banded together to establish the Blitz Music and Entertainment Festival. This event seeks to provide high school and university students with a safe environment where they can enjoy live bands and fun activities in a totally drug- and alcohol-free setting. The festival invites young and upcoming bands from across the Darling Downs and Queensland to perform all afternoon and into the night. This provides fresh young bands with an opportunity to gain invaluable experience and exposure in front of a broad audience. In addition to live music, Blitz provides a wide range of activities for young people, including beach volleyball, a climbing wall, dual horizontal bungee and inflatable gladiator fights. The evening of fun and entertainment is capped off with a fireworks spectacular for the crowd.

The inaugural Blitz event was held in March this year and enjoyed overwhelming support from the community with a huge turnout of over 1,500 young people. This was a very impressive attendance considering that organisers had anticipated a roll-up of between 300 and 400 people. The terrific response from young people in the region is very encouraging and clearly highlights the popularity and demand for such events in regional areas.

This type of event is something of great value to the Darling Downs and Queensland. Regional and rural youth do not have the entertainment opportunities that are taken for granted in larger metropolitan areas. Often in the search for entertainment to combat their boredom, many young people turn to drugs or alcohol to get their kicks. The Blitz festival is a great initiative that strikes at the very heart of this problem by promoting healthy and safe entertainment for regional young people. The huge turnout at this year's festival is testament that Blitz is making a positive impact on the Toowoomba youth scene.

The youth pastor at the Spring Street church, Alex Attard, is one of the main driving forces behind the event. With his very enthusiastic volunteer helpers he is hoping to expand the Blitz event to make it even bigger and better in 2002. I am currently supporting Alex and his team in their attempt to gain much-needed funding so that they can promote the event more widely in schools and universities, as well as bring in more bands and entertainment facilities and provide increased security and a greater number of amenities.

I congratulate Alex and the Spring Street church on pioneering such a wonderful youth event for the Darling Downs. It is youth oriented events such as Blitz that the state government should be bending over backwards to support, because they provide real and tangible opportunities for regional youth and directly combat boredom and substance abuse in these communities.
