



Speech by

CHRISTINE SCOTT

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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YEAR OF THE OUTBACK

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT (Charters Towers—ALP) (11.55 a.m.): The Year of the Outback is truly special. When I was elected in February last year I never thought I would be asked to officially open a government event celebrating an unlawful act from the past. I thought of consulting with the CMC but realised that the advice would have to be that if the Premier could celebrate a clandestine cattle drive then I could open an Agfest & Poddy Dodger's Festival in Aramac to celebrate the Year of the Outback. In keeping with our Year of the Outback theme, being centred on the Harry Redford Cattle Drive—that unlawful cattle drive—it was with great pleasure that, together with the Premier, I lent my support.

When launching the Year of the Outback in Aramac in January the Premier made some telling points. He said within 350 kilometres of Aramac Australia's most popular song was written, our biggest airline took flight, the great industries of beef and wool were built from scratch, the Australian Labor Party was formed, the world's only known tracks of a dinosaur stampede were found, Jackie Howe set a world shearing record and the world's greatest clandestine cattle drive began. He asked, 'Can anyone nominate another 350 kilometre area of Australia which is richer in heritage, history or spirit?' As usual he was right. It would be hard to find a richer spot in Australia's heart. For those who were there for the January opening I am pleased to relate the Premier donated the framed pictorial record of that event to the Parliament. It adorns a wall on level 5 of the Parliamentary Annexe.

This year is all about a rightful recognition of the men and women who pioneered this nation's heart and, of course, those who continue to live and work there today. I place on record my best wishes to the Harry Redford Cattle Drive organisers, Paddy McHugh and Andrew Smith, as well as boss drover Bob Marshall and the team. I wish them all the very best for a trip which will culminate in Roma later this year.

I especially congratulate the Aramac Shire Council on being the driving force in making all this happen. This shire and the people of Muttaborra and Aramac are truly a mouse that roars. A shire of less than 1,000 people hosting the state's premier Year of the Outback event reflects well on a can-do community. It is a great example of what the west can do when we work together. They are doing a fabulous job and I am their biggest fan.

The bush is a bit like a family when we have a dispute. Parochialism might have us having the odd internal argument, but when unified we are unmatched in our strength. The Harry Redford Cattle Drive has united this community. They are united in their celebration and in their sense of purpose, and our state government has assisted in making that unity possible by contributing \$50,000 towards the Harry Redford Cattle Drive. It is the key event in our Year of the Outback. It is an event which embodies everything positive about our great year, and the timing of the Year of the Outback could not be better because this year we have 10 Queensland Heritage Trails Network projects in the outback worth \$27 million. These have either just been completed or are due to be completed later in the year. It is about conserving and protecting our cultural heritage. It is about stimulating local economies and, most of all, creating jobs.

It has been great to hear no Americanisms in conjunction with this cattle drive. In that great John Williamson song *A Flag of Our Own* he says that we are not yankee sidekicks or second-class poms. I am really pleased we have not heard anyone talking about cattle rustling or stampedes and no-

one has called anyone a cowboy, because that is a derogatory term in north Queensland. Calling someone a cowboy is definitely not paying them a compliment.

People may well ask why the people of the Aramac shire are celebrating the exploits of a cattle thief. It is not about that at all. It is about recognising and celebrating the skills of our pastoral workers and our bush people, who are the most multiskilled on this earth. Our pastoral workers or our bush people—or our ringers as we sometimes call them; not cowboys—need so many skills. They have to be able to fix a fence, repair a vehicle, pull a bore, ride and fix a motorbike, carry out minor veterinary procedures—or, as I sometimes say, do rude things to animals—and be horsemen and butchers. These are just some of the skills they need. I am sure Harry Redford would subscribe to these sentiments.

As someone who was born in the Kimberley district of Western Australia, who was brought up on station properties in the north and west of Australia and who travelled home from my birth in a Royal Flying Doctor aircraft, I truly understand what the bush is all about. I am determined that while I am a state member I will try to make sure more people from the cities understand how those of us who come from the bush feel about where we live. This is done in today's spirit of celebrating a colourful past and building confidently for an assured future. I ask the Queensland parliament to join with me today in saluting the people of the Aramac shire and the towns of Muttaborra and Aramac for a fabulous job well done.