



Speech by

ELISA ROBERTS

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

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CLEAN UP THE BAY DAY

Miss ELISA ROBERTS (Gympie—Ind) (7.33 p.m.): Once again the communities in the Gympie electorate are showing the way forward. I am pleased to be able to highlight the great work being undertaken by the community at Tin Can Bay. One band of volunteers whose motto is 'don't throw it, stow it, formed approximately a year ago when a local fisherman, Len Hopkinson, and his skipper were out fishing for mullet and were disgusted to see the litter among the mangroves. Len was so distressed by what he saw he wanted to do something about it. So he went home to his wife and they discussed what they could do about the rubbish. They came up with the idea of a Clean up the Bay Day. They enlisted the help of the local Coast Care group—the Maryborough Coast Care group—the Department of Transport Marine at Maryborough and the Department of Defence at Camp Kerr. A meeting was organised.

From the initial meeting Len's wife, Violet, was voted as organiser and Len was assistant organiser of the first Clean up the Bay Day. The Cooloola Shire Council was persuaded to supply a truck and the volunteers filled the truck with three loads of rubbish. Members of the Tin Can Bay Commercial Net Fishermen and the Tin Can Bay Coast Care group provided the core of volunteers for that first Clean up the Bay Day. Since then two more clean-up days have been organised. The National Parks and Wildlife Service at Maryborough has now come on board and I was pleased to join the effort for the most recent Clean Up the Bay Day.

It is amazing to see the type of rubbish that we found: 20-litre old drums, four-litre plastic bottles, an old dingy with bad paint, plastic shopping bags of all sizes, gear boxes, glass bottles, broken tyres, plastic sheets, plastic pipes and the insidious plastic bait packets. The litter that is washed on our shores comes from the boats of careless people who throw their rubbish overboard and people who continue to use the bay as a rubbish dump.

I must mention a local business, Barnacles, which provides generous sponsorship of the event by providing a boat to ferry rubbish back to the foreshore and a much welcomed sausage sizzle at the end of the day for the weary cleaners. I am happy to say that, in recognition of the proactive and community-mindedness of Len and his wife, Vi, they were awarded the Coastcare Community Group Award last August. I say congratulations to them both. I have great admiration for Len, Vi and their dedicated team of volunteers. They are a true inspiration and proof that a little care and vision can do great things for the environment and the community.