



Speech by

GEOFF WILSON

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Mr WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (12.22 a.m.): I rise to inform the House of two young people in my electorate who have achieved the great honour of being selected in the Special Olympics Australian team to participate in the world games in Dublin, Ireland, in June this year. They are Suzie O'Moore, who has been selected in the swim team, and Kelly Dears, who is in the basketball team. Both these athletes have been involved in Special Olympics for over 10 years representing Queensland at many national games and now have achieved one of their goals in representing Australia. The underlying belief of Special Olympics is that persons with intellectual disability could, with proper training, not only take part in competitive sports but benefit from them. In 1968 Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the Special Olympics. The Special Olympics program is now in more than 150 countries around the world. In 1976 Special Olympics was established in Australia with programs in Kempsey, Launceston and Melbourne. In 1988 Special Olympics commenced in Queensland and a team of athletes and coaches attended the second national games held in Sydney. Special Olympics is a volunteer organisation that provides people with an intellectual disability the opportunity to strengthen their character, develop their physical skills, display their talents and fulfil their human potential through sports training and competition.

The Special Olympics Summer World Games will be the biggest sporting event in the world in 2003 where 7,000 athletes will compete supervised by 3,000 coaches, 28,000 families will attend and 500,000 spectators are expected. Competitors will represent 166 countries in 21 sports. The costs for staging the games will be 34 million Euro and in-kind contributions of 23 million Euro. Special Olympics Queensland is run by volunteers and raises funds from the community to assist in travel costs for selected athletes. All expenses need to be fundraised. The levy amount for each athlete to travel and compete at the world games is \$4,900 and the selected athletes and families are working extremely hard in this area to raise the much-needed funds. I know that all members of parliament are frequently approached for assistance by many worthy sporting and charity organisations from their own electorates and wider afield. I bring to the attention of the House the work of Special Olympics with the hope that, amidst all of the worthy requests for assistance, members, if approached, may be able to provide some assistance. The work of Special Olympics Queensland is indeed very special and has a far-reaching impact on providing a brighter future for children with disabilities and for families. It is all summed up in the Special Olympics motto: let me win, but if I cannot win let me brave in the attempt.