



Speech by

Dr LESLEY CLARK

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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ORCHESTRAS, CAIRNS REGION

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (12.03 a.m.): Tomorrow I will again join staff, students and parents at the Cairns State High School presentation evening where we will be entertained by its award winning orchestra. The latest achievement of the school's 70-strong orchestra was at the Australian Academy Festival of Music where it was named most outstanding orchestra. It also won prizes for best strings, best brass and best woodwind. Having personally watched these outstanding musicians twice win the schools Fanfare Festival competition, its latest success came as no surprise. Long time conductor Bob Favell is truly inspirational, getting the very best from his students year after year. The ability and commitment of Cairns High's music coordinator Lizanne Smith is also an integral part of the orchestra's success, and I congratulate them all. She said following their win—

Being isolated you're never sure what other schools are doing, particularly in Brisbane.

However, there is absolutely no doubt that our musicians are amongst the best in the state, and per head of population I am sure that there is more musical talent in far-north Queensland than in any other region in Queensland.

I also want to acknowledge two other successful Cairns youth orchestras. I am one of the patrons of the Cairns Youth Orchestra, now in its 33rd year, which tours annually and plays regularly at local events. Musical director Marg Duffy is also secretary of the organisation and, together with her Treasurer husband Kevin and president Lee Howarth, manages the development of its three separate orchestras. Over the last 33 years Marg and Kevin have nurtured the talents of thousands of young people, and our community is indebted to them for their dedication to our youth and music.

A more recent orchestra on the scene is the Cairns String Orchestra formed in 1996 and coordinated by director Stella Massey and supported by a committee headed by president Paul Campbell. This orchestra provides invaluable support for primary and secondary school string players throughout the Cairns region to develop their skills and talents. The 30-member orchestra has recently returned from a 10-day tour of Japan at the invitation of the Australia Japan Friendship Society where it visited schools and on occasion played with Japanese students. It was a great experience for students, fostering greater cultural understanding through the universal language of music as acknowledged by Catherine Wilson, one of the young players, who, writing about the tour, said—

Through music we could achieve a common goal, to entertain and be united.

The depth of musical talent in Cairns has been fostered by Queensland's school instrumental music program which is acknowledged to be the best in Australia. Most of the schools in my electorate have school orchestras. While they have yet to match Cairns State High, they perform at a very high standard. Smithfield High, Edge Hill, Caravonica and Redlynch state school orchestras spring to mind, having regularly heard them play at school and community functions. I conclude by congratulating all of the students in our youth orchestras and thank their teachers, conductors and the parents who support them, thereby enriching our lives and our communities through their music.