



Speech by
Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Tuesday, 28 September 2004

WANPA-RDA MATILDA OUTBACK EDUCATION CENTRE

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (9.26 p.m.): I recently had the pleasure of meeting the winners of the Wanpa-rda Matilda Who Dares Wins school competition at a function here at Parliament House. The name Wanpa-rda comes from the indigenous dialect of the Birdsville district and means 'to carry' and Matilda comes from the Banjo Paterson song *Waltzing Matilda* and refers to a swag. Hence, Wanpa-rda Matilda means to carry your swag! School students from state, independent and Catholic schools in years 6 and 7 from the Education Queensland districts of Stafford, Geebung and Mt Gravatt were invited to write an original story or create an artwork illustrating an aspect of Australian outback life. The competition was organised by the Australian Workers Heritage Centre and aimed to promote awareness among urban schoolchildren about life in the Australian outback.

Mr Terry Sullivan: Doesn't Bobby Gleeson do a great job!

Mr PURCELL: Bobby Gleeson does a marvellous job. This was the first year the competition was held and it was so successful that it will now become an annual event. I know that the member for Stafford promoted it in his electorate as much as he possibly could. The 12 winners each received a certificate and an all-expenses paid trip to the Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre in Barcaldine aboard the *Spirit of the Outback* train. I was particularly pleased to present Paris McLaughlin with her prize. Paris is a year 7 student at St Peter and St Paul's School at Bulimba. Paris and her fellow winners certainly enjoyed their prize—that is, a great learning experience and a rare opportunity to experience the pioneering spirit along with original indigenous culture during the September school holidays, and they have just returned from their trip.

The Wanpa-rda Matilda Outback Education Centre was established by the Australian Workers Heritage Centre in 1997. It is the first of its kind in Queensland and provides a base from which to explore the many sites of educational significance in Barcaldine with its Tree of Knowledge where the first Labor Party in the world was formed. Only a day's trip away is the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, the Qantas Founders Outback Museum, Blackall Woolscour and a host of other educational sites. Since its opening, it has accommodated thousands of school students from not only Queensland but also foreign students from as far away as Germany. It saddens me to think that we have this outstanding tourist attraction right here on our own doorstep yet very few Queenslanders have ever been there.

I urge everyone to make an effort to visit this interesting education centre and to promote it wherever possible throughout their electorates and their schools. The centre can work with the schools and assist in tailoring packages to suit their individual needs and requirements. Activities include astronomy, orienteering, nature walks or travel back in time to 1906 to learn what life was like working on a Queensland property in the early 1900s. Visiting the centre and its surrounds is a great experience and one that I believe everyone should experience at some time in their lives. It is a unique opportunity to get back to nature and see first-hand our great Australian outback and to learn about our heritage and unique style of life. Sadly, only 12 per cent of people who live on the east coast of Australia have ever been west of the divide and get an opportunity to see great places like the centres I have just spoken about. I seek leave to incorporate the names of the 12 winners and the three runners-up of the competition in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

1. Alice McIntosh
2. Lauren Pflugrath
3. Jennifer Wilson
4. Paris McLaughlin
5. Bridget Harkin
6. Christina Scotson
7. Kimberly Brennan
8. Brooke McKinnon
9. Jarryd Heselden
10. Chantelle Romeo
11. Zara Carnes
12. Lana Gordon

Highly commended:

1. Sheriden Gluer
2. Shikeita Gilmont
3. Erin Morris