



Speech by

Jack Dempsey

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

Hansard Thursday, 18 October 2007

QUEENSLAND JUSTICES ASSOCIATION STATE CONFERENCE

Mr DEMPSEY (Bundaberg—NPA) (7.23 pm): Recently I had the honour to speak at the 2007 Queensland Justices Association State Conference. One could only be impressed by the quality of personnel, their enthusiasm and commitment as the Bundaberg branch of the Queensland Justices Association hosted the annual QJA State Conference.

Justices of the Peace play an important role within the community. They are a special group of professionals who are prepared to go the extra mile to serve their communities. JPs are often the first point of contact to welcome new arrivals into our community and the first point of call in relation to legal matters. I have a great deal of respect for JPs as they set the bar high in relation to accountability and honesty.

The theme of the conference was Community in Focus, and it was the culmination of 12 months of planning and hard work by the Bundaberg branch, consisting of chairman David Read, his wife and assistant secretary Debra, deputy chairperson Sandy Fogarty, secretary Deirdre Choveaux, treasurer and assistant trainer Victor Dawson, trainer Matt Dunford, media and membership officer David Dempster, executive assistant Carolyn Beardmore and fundraiser Neville Rayfield. These people are extremely dedicated to not only serving the community but also the recruitment and training of new members and the ongoing professional development of existing and new members.

The conference was officially welcomed by elders from the Gurang Land Council—the traditional owners of the land—Christine Royan, Muriel Johnson and Aunty Lyn Martin. I would like to thank Michael Isdale from the Bundaberg Office of the Public Trustee of Queensland, Sergeant Ashley Stanke from the Queensland Police Service, Leanne Donaldson from the Department of Child Safety, Rory Jackson and Rebecca Irwin from the Australian Customs Service, QJA president Bob Pilkington, QJA vice-presidents Doug Hull, Bernice Lippiatt and Garry Franke, directors Mr Ray Young OAM, Valmai Macaulay, Marian Vierveyzer, Roger Kelly and Ray Burrows, and registrar Greg Cuthbert who attended and contributed to the outstanding success of the event.

There are many thousands of JPs and Commissioners for Declarations registered statewide. The conference drew attendees from Cairns in the north through to Tweed Heads in the south. The community support for this event was also wonderful, with no fewer than 38 official sponsors.

After serving as a police officer for almost 20 years prior to my election as the state member for Bundaberg, I know well the magnitude and importance of the work that JPs do as an integral part of our justice system. I sincerely thank all JPs for their time and commitment in serving their communities. JPs are certainly a special group of people and I regard them very much as unsung heroes and quiet achievers. I know JPs serve the community to the best of their abilities. Some are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, all voluntarily. On Christmas Day double time and a half rates apply but two and a half times nothing is still nothing. It is very important that we all recognise the vital role that JPs play within the community, thank them for it, and give them every support that we can.