



Speech by

**Jack Dempsey**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG**

Hansard Wednesday, 14 November 2007

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## **RED CROSS BLOOD DONOR CENTRE**

**Mr DEMPSEY** (Bundaberg—NPA) (10.06 pm): Recently I had the privilege of attending a very special ceremony where not only were a group of local heroes recognised but also everyone present was inspired by a very touching story. The Bundaberg Red Cross Blood Donor Centre held its annual recognition ceremony during which 12 citizens received presentations after reaching donor milestones in 2007.

Centre manager, Darelle Rechenberg, who heads an extremely friendly and super efficient team, opened the evening. But it was Savannah's story which was told by Bundaberg mother Mrs Elizabeth Schneider about her six-year-old daughter's brave battle with a rare cancer over the past few months and how blood donors had helped save her life which really touched everyone's heart and brought home to all the importance of the service and the value of blood which is truly the gift of life. Elizabeth's husband, Steven Schneider, was also on hand to help acknowledge the donors.

Prominent community identity Gordon Duncan spoke about his experiences and how Savannah's story meant so much to donors such as himself, before receiving a presentation for achieving an extra special milestone of 200 donations. Gordon Fritz and John Tadjell joined the 150 club while Michael Killip, Lola Redman, Rae Suosaari, Graham Evans, Peter Lewendon, Richard McDonald, David Dempster and Bruce Paterson brought up their centuries. There was one bone marrow donor, Stephen Ball.

People as young as 16 can donate, and there were also school awards. It was great to see that more and more young people are becoming involved in this vital community service. All district high schools enthusiastically participated in this program. Special congratulations must also go to school shield winners, Bundaberg North State High School.

No fewer than 76 clubs and businesses also joined in the 2006-07 Bundaberg Blood Challenge. This function ran like clockwork under the direction of the centre liaison officer, David Ligtenberg, while Australian Red Cross Blood Service Queensland's marketing and communication manager, Niki Stark, travelled to Bundaberg for the occasion. The need for blood donations is ongoing and many people today would not be alive if it were not for Australia's many generous and voluntary unpaid blood donors who give blood regularly to help those in need. Receiving blood is a basic right that we just expect will be available to us. The problem is that only a very small proportion—around three per cent—of people actually give blood, yet sooner or later one in three of us will need it.

There are many ways in which people can make a contribution—as a blood donor or as a volunteer if they are not eligible to give blood or do not wish to do so. People can also become involved through a Club Red program at work; by being a Young Blood; by celebrating the Four Seasons by donating in summer, autumn, winter and spring; or by Donate with a Mate, a national campaign. In Bundaberg the Mates Donate for Savannah campaign is up and running and is aimed at getting local leaders, businesses and community groups to donate blood. I invite everyone here to show their leadership by joining in their local campaigns.