



Speech by
Jan Jarratt

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Hansard Tuesday, 13 November 2007

WHITSUNDAY SCHOOLIES WEEK; X21 PROJECT

Ms JARRATT (Whitsunday—ALP) (10.33 pm): It is not often that I wish I were 17 again. Usually that thought fills me with dreadful memories of puberty, pimples and unrequited love. However, maybe—just maybe—I would sell my soul to be 17 again for one week if I could spend that week at schoolies in the Whitsundays.

Last week I met with members of the Whitsunday Schoolies Week Advisory Council who informed me of the fantastic line-up of events planned for the upcoming week when thousands of school leavers will descend upon Airlie Beach to celebrate the end of their years of formal education. Included in the planned schoolies-only activities are foam parties and discos at a local night club, a red frog stage providing music and activities, midnight movies, horizontal bungie, a mechanical bull and surfboard riding activity, water sports, helicopter flights and boat trips to Whitehaven Beach. A free bus will ferry schoolies around the town, taking them from their accommodation to the various activity centres and back. Many local businesses will be offering discounted food, clothes and activities for participating schoolies.

Of course safety is a prime consideration for the committee and this year features a rigorous process for registration as a schoolie which will result in the issue of a photo ID card that must be produced to gain entry to any of the many planned activities. Many accommodation complexes will have a trained youth chaplain living on site to assist with any issues that may arise and a chill-out zone will be established where young people can go to relax, rehydrate or seek refuge from the non-stop party going on around them.

I am pleased that the government has been able to contribute to the 2008 Schoolies Week celebrations in Whitsunday through a \$30,000 grant, and I acknowledge the contribution of many other groups including the council and the RACQ. I also acknowledge the enormous contribution of the Schoolies Week Advisory Council and the volunteers who will provide the necessary supervision and coordination to make the week possible. I trust that all the young school leavers who come to Airlie Beach over the next week will have an enjoyable time that is memorable for all the right reasons.

In the short time I have left I want to tell the House about an exciting new coal infrastructure project that has just come on line in regional Queensland. Last week the Premier and the Treasurer made the journey to Abbot Point, which is just north of Bowen, to officially open Ports Corporation Queensland's X21 project. This project sees the expansion of the coal loading capacity at Abbot Point go from 12 million tonnes per annum to 21 million tonnes per annum. This is good news for Queensland.

I am hoping that there is even better news ahead because Ports Corporation is proposing to develop a \$680 million stage 3 expansion of the coal terminal that would effectively double the port's present capacity. In reality, this proposal will only proceed if the missing rail link between North Goonyella and Newlands gets the go-ahead, so I was delighted that last week the Premier said that progress on this project was well advanced. I applaud the government's support for regional infrastructure projects and I look forward to positive news of the missing link project.