



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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TEENAGE ADVENTURE CAMPS QUEENSLAND; PALM BEACH- CURRUMBIN LIONS CLUB

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (4.34 am): After that disgusting display of unparliamentary language, I would like to talk about Teenage Adventure Camps Queensland, which held its annual camp at the Rocks Resort in Currumbin between 25 June and 2 July, with 25 kids aged from 13 to 19 attending. In its 12th year, TACQ, which is completely funded by donations and run by a dedicated committee and busy team of volunteers, organised a smorgasbord of activities for these young people with life-threatening illnesses. Children with illnesses such as cerebral palsy, quadriplegia, spina bifida and the rare Morquio's disease participated in the daily events with great gusto. These were events like a night out at Dracula's, where they dressed up in gothic outfits, visits to Harbour Town and Carrara markets, rides on Harley Davidsons, joyflights at Southport Flying Club and even a mini Olympics.

Eighteen-year-old Elanora teen Kris Field, who is in year 12, said—

It's a great camp but it's too short and not held often enough.

Kris, one of only 12 people in Australia with rare Morquio's disease, was diagnosed when he was just two years old. At around 90 centimetres tall, Chris has normal body organs in a body that fails to maintain its growth rate. He is able to walk, but often uses an electric wheelchair.

Another eager participant was Todd Winther from the Sunshine Coast, who has cerebral palsy. Todd said—

I am fully aware that I am one of the lucky campers on the TACQ. Unlike most I have a long term life expectancy, and despite being confined to an electric wheelchair I am fairly independent. I would hazard a guess to say that most people upon first meeting me would feel sorry for my circumstances. However, I would not be the person that I am without my disability.

...

All of those involved with TACQ—the carers, the campers and the committee—are deserving of the praise that they receive for they all have added a different perspective to my life.

The Sunday evening farewell dinner was a most humbling encounter for this able-bodied local representative. There was not a dry eye in the room as these remarkably physically challenged teenagers recounted the past week's experiences and the enormous impact they had on them, the friends they had made, and teary farewells. You could hear a pin drop as some struggled with their speech to say how much they appreciated the efforts of the TACQ team.

It is no small feat dressing and transporting this number of kids with considerable challenges, yet the carers, many of whom took a week off work to help, said that they would not swap the experience for quids. Spontaneous laughter, irreverent humour, respectful compassion and genuine friendship filled the room with the most wonderful celebration of life. These are scenes I took away that evening and ones I will cherish.

Another joyous occasion in my electorate was the 50th anniversary celebration by the Palm Beach-Currumbin Lions Club, who were chartered in 1957 by the Coolangatta Lions Club. During a gala dinner

held at the Palm Beach-Currumbin RSL, who are also a great benefactor within our local community, presentations were made for exemplary service, including that of charter member Bill Freeman. Many outstanding achievements over the years on a number of projects that still stand today provide immeasurable enjoyment for our growing community, including the construction of the Salk Oval sports field, the Girl Guides Hall, the Tugun Progress Hall, Miami Great Hall and the Currumbin Swimming Pool.