



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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SAILABILITY

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (9.41 pm): I wish to take this opportunity to bring to the House's attention the remarkable efforts of the wonderful volunteers of an organisation called Sailability and the recent successes of two of its members, Sonja Gilmore and Belinda Hill. Firstly, Sailability is a volunteer-run organisation that works to facilitate sailing for people with disabilities. On the Gold Coast, Sailability operates out of Hollywell every Tuesday. I have on many occasions visited to experience firsthand the fun the volunteers and clients have during a day of sailing on our beautiful waters.

Participants at Sailability can sail as a crew member or sail solo in a dinghy. Sailability is well equipped to assist people with mobility problems with slings and winches, and of course all with the assistance of the fantastic volunteers. For people with diminished capabilities, Sailability offers them freedom from their disabilities and encourages them and inspires them to acknowledge their abilities and their individual skills.

Sonja Gilmore and Belinda Hill are two Sailability sailors who have not only discovered the fun of Sailability but have excelled exceptionally on the water. Their intellectual impairments have not stopped them from learning sailing and progressing to competing and indeed winning titles. I am pleased to announce that both these girls have been selected for the national team to compete at the 2007 World Summer Special Olympics to be held in Shanghai in October. Sonja and Belinda will be part of the Australian team of 128 aspiring athletes and 36 dynamic team officials.

Both ladies began sailing six years ago, and I am told that they race every Sunday at the Southport Yacht Club and both of them always take home a place or a medal. I know they have been training hard for their Special Olympics inclusion with their coach, Chris Ruston, and I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Sonja and Belinda on their selection and wish them well.

As the girls have to raise \$13,000 to get them there, I am encouraging the Gold Coast community to support their fundraising efforts. The Southport Yacht Club and the Runaway Bay Rotary Club, Mission Australia and the department of sport and recreation are huge supporters of Sailability—and so too are many individuals.

Recently, I had the great pleasure of officially commissioning a new boat, *The Nola belle*, which was generously donated by current treasurer, Nola Goode. This two-person sailing dinghy is a great asset for the club to assist in delivering the service they provide to many people with disabilities keen to get out on the water. I congratulate Sailability for its wonderful work and encourage sailors out there who would love to become a volunteer or know someone whose quality of life can be improved by learning to sail to contact the president of Sailability Gold Coast, Bob Curtis. It is a great team and people are guaranteed loads of satisfaction and fun.