



Speech by

Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 9 August 2007

VISIT TO CENTRAL QUEENSLAND

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (10.24 am): I want to take this opportunity to provide the House with an update on my visit to the central west Queensland region in my role as parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Communities. I enjoyed the opportunity to visit a number of central western Queensland councils and enterprises in Longreach and Barcaldine on Monday, 25 June and Tuesday, 26 June where I presented cheques for a range of initiatives including Blueprint for the Bush, Country Week and Queensland's 150th anniversary celebrations. The warm reception that I received from the region was enhanced by the chance to see firsthand such worthy local organisations and initiatives receiving financial support from the Queensland government.

The total amount of Queensland government funding received for the projects included on my itinerary totalled over \$800,000. Cheques were presented to the Remote Area Planning and Development Board, the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and Wanpa-Rda Matilda Outback Education Centre at the Australian Workers Heritage Centre as well as several local councils.

All these organisations are doing exceptional work in promoting investment opportunities and lifestyle benefits of the central west and in attracting more people to visit and or, indeed, settle in the area. The initiatives which received funding all broadly fit under the Blueprint for the Bush, which aims to address population decline and provide a much needed boost for rural areas. A highlight of the visit was an inspection of the multifunctional child-care centre, which was a shining example of integrated service delivery based upon strong collaborative planning and negotiation.

I also want to thank officers from the Queensland Police Service's Stock and Rural Crime Investigation Squad who kindly travelled many kilometres to the Longreach station to brief me, highlighting their outstanding commitment to a demanding job. I learnt a great deal from all the local people I met with and look forward to continuing to gain a firsthand understanding of the issues of concern to Queenslanders living in the bush. Most of all, I look forward to continuing to help the minister and the rest of the government with the Blueprint for the Bush initiatives commitment to encouraging greater economic prosperity.