



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 19 August 2009

KOKODA CHALLENGE

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.21 pm): Tonight I rise to recognise the legacy and spirit of Kokoda. In light of the recent tragedy in Papua New Guinea, I begin by offering my condolences to the families and friends of those who perished in the Kokoda plane crash on Tuesday, 11 August 2009. In no situation is it easy to lose a loved one, but under such sudden and tragic circumstances it is true heartbreak. My thoughts and deepest sympathy go to those who are dealing with this terrible loss, particularly those Queensland families involved.

Tonight I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of young Australians who keep the memory of Kokoda alive by participating in the Kokoda Challenge, run by the charity Kokoda Challenge Youth Program. Whilst far away from the mountainous terrain of the Owen Stanley Range in Papua New Guinea, the Kokoda Challenge, which was held on the weekend of 18 and 19 July, is by no means an easy feat to complete.

Reflecting the spirit of Kokoda, teams of four trek a 96-kilometre course through the Gold Coast hinterland within a 39-hour time limit. Every part of this challenge is designed to emulate the elements of the Kokoda spirit. The 96-kilometre course represents the actual distance of the Kokoda Track. The 39 hours to complete the challenge symbolises the 39th Militia, who were the first of the Australian troops to arrive at Kokoda on 15 July 1942, and the route is rugged, with climbs totalling 5,000 metres. Perhaps the most noteworthy of the Kokoda Challenge's reflections of the Kokoda spirit is the mateship, endurance and courage necessary for success.

Doug Henderson, chairman of the Kokoda Challenge Association, was compelled to raise awareness of the importance of the Kokoda Track to Australia and believed that young Australians held the key to keeping the spirit of Kokoda alive. I am pleased to state that this spirit is certainly alive in the electorate of Greenslopes. I take this opportunity to congratulate the five teams from Cavendish Road State High School that participated in the 2009 Kokoda Challenge. Each team consisted of one teacher and four students.

It is a credit to the Cavendish Road school community that 25 of the 27 participants completed the journey, making a 93 per cent completion rate for Cavendish Road, compared to a 75 per cent average completion rate. Not only do those participating in the challenge promote awareness of the importance of Kokoda; teams also raise funds to finance the cost of operating the Kokoda Challenge Youth Program, which supports youth at risk.

2009 is the second year that Cavendish Road State High School has competed, with a team placing second in the Stan Bisset Cup each time. This would not have been possible without the hard work of David Thomson, business and accounting teacher, who, apart from organising Cavendish Road's participation, also completed the trek along with teachers Michelle Hundt, Damien Gaffney, Nathan Maddox and Brendan Sue See. Also instrumental was teacher Jodi Preston, who managed the support crews and fundraising. The Cavendish Road State High School teams' efforts raised \$2,264, on top of the entrance fees and costs to compete. That is a wonderful effort. The efforts of Queenslanders like the staff and students of Cavendish Road State High School will ensure that the legacy of Kokoda will live on for generations to come.