



Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Wednesday, 19 August 2009

MA:MU CULTURAL AND HERITAGE EXHIBITION

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.58 am): In August 2008 the doors opened on Queensland's best natural high, the Ma:Mu Rainforest Canopy Walk near Innisfail. The Queensland government invested \$10 million in this world-class facility, which is the largest single piece of infrastructure ever built in a Queensland national park. Now, the government's support of the Ma:Mu people continues. For three days in September the general public will, for the first time, have an opportunity to see and appreciate the rich culture of the Ma:Mu people like never before. The Queensland government has contributed \$35,000 to this project, which consists of a 10-week Indigenous art and dance program leading up to a three-day public exhibition at the Innisfail Shire Hall on 15 September. Many as-yet-unseen historical artefacts will be on loan from the Queensland Museum, private homes, elders and local museums, which makes this a unique event.

What is particularly pleasing is the interaction that local students will have with the exhibition. Over 100 Ma:Mu children identified from over 11 schools will participate in the program, including a traditional boys-only prep to year 7 dance troupe. The exhibition will also be visited by nearly 2,000 school students from the Cassowary Coast and Far North Queensland. As well as arts and dance, the exhibition will include a bush tucker display and native animals, with accompanying stories shared by the elders and a traditional smoking ceremony at every performance.

Last week in Innisfail at the official launch I congratulated event coordinator Kerry Macgillivray as well as Ma:Mu elders Victor Maund, Dean Purcell, Henry Epong and Terry Edwards. They have all had a hand in bringing to life and sharing with the people of this region what can only be described as an exhibition of great significance. The Ma:Mu Cultural and Heritage Exhibition exemplifies the theme of NAIDOC this year, 'Honouring our elders, nurturing our youth'. I am proud to be associated with this event and I trust it will be the first of many more in future years.