



Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Thursday, 3 September 2009

ELLIOTT, MR J; GREAT PYRAMID RACE AND COUNTRY FAIR

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (7.59 pm): Firstly, I would like to acknowledge my friend and former colleague Julian Elliott and his son, Liam, who are in the gallery this evening. Last month, I had the great honour of officially opening the Great Pyramid Race and Country Fair, which has been an annual event since Queensland's centenary in 1959. It has become a legend. The Great Pyramid Race is a race like no other in Australia—a 12-kilometre cross-country race that includes a climb to the peak of Walsh's Pyramid, which stands 922 metres above my home town of Gordonvale.

With its Toward Q2 initiative, the government has set the ambition of Queenslanders becoming Australia's healthiest people. That is why we support events such as the Great Pyramid Race through the Queensland Events Regional Development Program. Q150 community funding of \$10,000 was provided in order to stage the grand street parade and put together a commemorative magazine to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the race. Ordinarily, the race is limited to 100 entrants, but in honour of Queensland's 150th birthday the number was increased to 150 with great success. The Great Pyramid Race shines the spotlight on what is truly a magnificent part of Australia. It is an opportunity for the Gordonvale community to show why it is still the envy of many in Far North Queensland.

I was also privileged on the day to present community service awards in recognition of two people who have consistently given of their time so generously to benefit the local community. It is often said that behind every great man is a great woman. President of the Great Pyramid Race organising committee and businesswoman Cheryl Campbell is well known. It is her husband, George, who turns this saying on its ear. The entire Campbell family are an institution in community activities in Gordonvale, but George Campbell is an unsung hero who deserves public recognition for his work. He has been a silent partner—one-half of a relationship that has helped with events such as the Great Pyramid Race for many years. Almost everyone in Gordonvale knows his famous big red truck, which has carried more chairs and trestle tables than it would care to remember. George is like salt and pepper: he is in everything. No matter what it is, he puts his hand up to sponsor, donate or chip in. He has also been a terrific supporter of junior sport in the area, long after his own children were no longer involved.

The second award recipient, Thelma Kelly, was also long overdue for recognition with her enormous fundraising efforts for the Leukaemia Foundation over the past eight years in order to assist patients and their families living in Far North Queensland. I am told that Thelma alone has raised over \$70,000 over this period. In Far North Queensland in the last financial year the Leukaemia Foundation provided over 3,500 rooms to patients and their families. With what Thelma has raised, this equates to over 467 room nights over the last 10 years. Every day as we go about our day there are five people in Queensland being diagnosed with leukaemia. This is why people like Thelma Kelly are important to the foundation.

The Great Pyramid Race has really grown to showcase Gordonvale for the wonderful community that it is, but the reason there is still such a strong sense of community in Gordonvale is that of the efforts of the Great Pyramid Race event organising committee and because of people like George Campbell and Thelma Kelly.