



Speech by

# Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Friday, 19 June 2009

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## SYDNEY TO SURFERS PARADISE CHARITY BIKE RIDE

**Mrs KEECH** (Albert—ALP) (4.13 am): Some of my constituents are so passionate about making a difference to the lives of vulnerable young people that they are prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to help them. In May of this year, a group of Queensland cyclists, including many from the Albert electorate, accepted the invitation from the Rotary Club of Engadine to ride 1,000 kilometres—from Sydney to Surfers Paradise—over seven days to raise much needed funds for homeless young men and women. In my wisdom, I chose to decline the invitation to ride a bike and instead joined the support crew in a very comfortable air-conditioned van chauffeured by retired professional coach driver Merv Collard and our navigator, Debbie Walker.

For the past 11 years the Rotary Club of Engadine, under the energetic guidance of ride coordinator Ken Robinson and hardworking club secretary Kevin Stuart have, together with club members, their families and supporters, including sponsors Macsim Fastenings Pty Ltd, raised over \$1.2 million for Father Chris Riley's Youth Off The Streets. Upon leaving Sydney, the pack pedalled up the Pacific Highway and rode into pretty villages. Then they rode on to Grafton and Kyogle, crossed old timber bridges near Nimbin where they climbed hard to the famous Sphinx Rock Cafe and dodged roadworks and caught their breath as they waited for an ambulance to take another wounded comrade off to a New South Wales hospital. Upon crossing the Queensland border, the 170 cyclists rode proudly and triumphantly in a very impressive pack into Southport's Sea World Nara Resort.

Pack 5 captain, Mike Pearson, and team members and crew Jason Ballantine, Ashley Bassett, Ross Bobbermein, Merv Collard, Ben Craker, Adam and Pauline Guise, Erin, Shea and Paul Heyde, Dave Jeffs, Glenn Johnson, Allan Jones, Peter Keech, Paul Kelly-Taylor, Lorraine Longato, Neil Matthews, Laurie Montague, Mary Rae, Richard Vallack, Luke and Debbie Walker and Paul Willoughby can be so proud of their efforts. Through sunburn, chafing and concussion, with quick pit stops in New South Wales hospitals, I know it was their passion to raise funds for Father Chris Riley's charity that drove them through the pain barrier.

As a former child safety minister, I had the opportunity to meet Father Chris on many occasions and to invite him to consider providing his services to Queensland's at-risk children. I know the almost \$250,000 raised by the club, sponsors and cyclists will be used wisely in giving the young people a new start to life.

I was particularly proud that my husband, Peter Keech, was one of just a few riders who was honoured personally by Father Chris with an award for his fifth consecutive Sydney to Surfers Paradise ride.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mrs KEECH:** I thank honourable members for their support. As to the question I was asked every single day during the ride, 'So, will you be riding next year?' my response is: watch this space.