



Speech by

Hon. Phil Reeves

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Hansard Wednesday, 11 November 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Pyjama Foundation, Volunteer of the Year Award

Hon. PG REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport) (10.20 am): As Minister for Child Safety, I applaud the extraordinary commitment of foster and kinship carers, Child Safety Services staff and our many community partners. One of those valued partners is the Pyjama Foundation. Tonight the Pyjama Foundation is holding its fifth annual general meeting at the Parliamentary Annexe, and this follows on from its recent fifth birthday celebrations.

As this House would be aware, this Brisbane based charity does an exceptional job through its literacy programs to create brighter futures for children who have suffered abuse or neglect. This is in no small part thanks to the commitment of founder and chief executive officer Bronwyn Sheehan—who won the title of 2009 Queensland Australian of the Year—and her pyjama angel volunteers across the state.

Already the foundation has recruited and trained up to 1,000 pyjama angels who volunteer to read to more than 1,000 children in care across Queensland. These pyjama angels help with homework, play educational games or do puzzles, play music and sing or kick a ball outside—giving children in care the same opportunities as their school friends.

Tonight at the foundation's AGM, it will give me great pleasure to present two of these pyjama angels with the Pyjama Foundation Award for Volunteer of the Year. I sincerely congratulate Fern Ong of Warner and Penni Fyfe of McDowall on jointly winning this award which acknowledges their outstanding dedication since 2006 to helping children and young people in foster care develop literacy and numeracy skills.

The Pyjama Foundation is a noble organisation that deserves and gets the support of the Bligh government. This financial year we have committed more than \$215,000 to the Pyjama Foundation through joint funding from the Department of Communities and the Department of Education and Training. These funds will ensure the foundation's Love of Learning Program will continue to reach more children in foster and kinship care across the state.