




Speech by  
**Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

Hansard Wednesday, 7 September 2011

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## **FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARE; EKKA**

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (9.28 pm): It was a delight on Thursday, 11 August this year to join the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Sport at the Ekka to launch the new foster and kinship carer recruitment campaign. 'Foster a child. Foster a future' is one of the most far-reaching campaigns ever undertaken to find more foster carers. It aims to encourage more people to make a difference in the lives of Queensland's most vulnerable children and young people. Right now in Brisbane, 535 families have to share the care of 1,025 children and young people. We want everyone to get behind this worthwhile campaign. I take a moment to honour those foster-parents who are out there at the moment doing a fantastic job. It is more than just fostering a child; it is really about fostering a future. The campaign encourages community and sporting groups to promote the benefits of foster care to their members.

Prospective carers can find out everything they need to know on a brand-new website simply titled Foster a Future. The site has a step-by-step guide on how they can make a difference and become a real-life carer with stories and a self-assessment tool so they can work out how fostering may fit into their lives. We have also developed a CD tool kit with a range of posters, postcards and a short video giving organisations the tools to promote foster and kinship care, and what a great promotion this is. In addition, the campaign will be promoted with community service announcements on radio, in key national magazines and at a series of major sporting events.

Foster carers are an invaluable part of today's society, where more and more children are entering the child protection system. Currently in Queensland there are more than 8,000 children who cannot live safely at home. These kids need a safe and loving environment where they can reach their full potential. Carers provide that safe haven each and every day and night, signifying the important role they play in a child's life. They make an extraordinary difference to the young lives of Queenslanders. It is a rewarding experience and one I hope many more Queenslanders are eager to take part in. It is fantastic for them to do so and I encourage the residents in Brisbane Central to take up this fantastic offer.

The Ekka was once again a fantastic and very successful event, with more than 400,000 people coming together to celebrate the state's biggest and most loved event—the Royal Brisbane Show or the Ekka, as we all know it. In CEO Jonathan Tunney's words—

More than ever, the Ekka was truly about bringing the city and country together.

The statistics were fantastic. The traditional favourites remained popular, with 244,000 dagwood dogs sold, 10,000 CWA scones enjoyed and more than 100,000 Ekka strawberry sundaes eaten throughout the show, and the minister was one of those 100,000 who enjoyed one. The Ekka was fantastic once again.