




Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Thursday, 2 August 2012

RIDE FOR ISABEL

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (5.39 pm): Last Friday was the start of the third annual Ride for Isabel to raise awareness and funds for Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support, or SANDS, Queensland. The ride honours the memory of my baby daughter Isabel, who was stillborn at 41 weeks in 2008. There really are no words to describe the pain of losing Isabel and my wife, Kerry, and I vowed to do whatever we could to raise funds for this parent-driven organisation that provides much needed counselling and support services for families and those affected by the sudden death of an infant or through reproductive loss. All proceeds from the Ride for Isabel go to SANDS Queensland to support counselling and bereavement services as well as events like the Walk to Remember in Cairns. Starting as a one-day 85 kilometre ride in 2010, the ride has grown to an almost 300-kilometre cycling event over three days. Since its inception, the ride has raised more than \$11,000 for SANDS Queensland, and we are hoping to add a few more thousand dollars this year once the tally is finalised. Last Friday morning I joined other riders and hopped on my bike at Smithfield and rode up the Kuranda Range and had morning tea at Mareeba's Coffee Works, lunch at Atherton and ended up in Milanda. On day 2 riders rode to Milla Milla and down the Palmerston Highway, with an overnight stop at Innisfail. On day 3, after morning tea at Abbeyfield in Babinda, the ride concluded at Gordonvale.

From the outset I knew that the 2012 ride would be particularly hard for me, but it was not because there was an extra day this year. In September 2010 I was gearing up to take part in the Cardiac Challenge, a ride from Cairns to Cooktown, to support the Far North Queensland Hospital Foundation. The night before the ride I had given a speech and revved up the riders at Cazalys but hours later fell very ill for several days. Since that time I just have not been right. I continue to feel lethargic and weak and have had numerous tests to find out the cause. I said when I launched the Ride for Isabel in 2010 that it would happen every year, even if I was the only one doing it. A few months ago, even that could have been in doubt.

While I still do not know what the cause of my sickness has been, I am on the mend and am feeling stronger by the day and I really enjoyed getting back on the bike for this very personal and important event. Because I have not been well and because I have been suffering from the flu, I could not do every single kilometre of the ride this year but just about all of it. But any disappointment was wiped away when my family were there to greet me at the end of the three days on Sunday. It was also special for another reason. It was our 12th wedding anniversary and the day we announced to our family that we have a new baby on the way. A big thanks to Glenys Duncan, Coral Lee Kemp and Judy Phillips for their amazing job organising this year's Ride for Isabel and also to our sponsors and supporters—Piccones IGA Edmonton, Coffee Works at Mareeba, Julie's Tasty Treats, McDonald's, Avis, Piefection, Sibby's Bakehouse, Innisfail PCYC, the Lions Clubs of Milla Milla and Gordonvale, the Queensland Police Service, the QFRS, the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Babinda Harvest Festival committee, Yum Yums Cafe, Malanda Falls Caravan Park and the Department of Transport and Main Roads. I know that the Ride for Isabel is growing in popularity and is now firmly established in our local cycling calendar.