




Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

Hansard Tuesday, 5 June 2012

BEENLEIGH CANE FESTIVAL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (11.34 am): My colleagues the members for Albert and Waterford and I attended the cane festival dinner last Saturday night, and what an event it was! The fundraising continued on the night with some charity items going up for auction and some good funds being raised. To refresh the memories of those in the chamber, the cane festival has nine ambassadors and a wonderful parade with over 70 floats. The nine ambassadors were brought to account, if you like, with their fundraising and involvement in the community on Saturday night. The wonderful news is that Sharni Willmann, who was sponsored by the Canegrowers association, raised the most money in the charity event with \$17,184, an amazing amount for one person to raise. The nine ambassadors raised in excess of \$65,000 in total—a new record and way above any amount raised in the past.

An interesting aspect of this cane festival is that, for the first time, individual ambassadors were able to direct 75 per cent of their fundraising to their own nominated charity. This means that close to \$50,000 went directly to the nominated charities of the nine ambassadors. The balance of the proceeds then goes to the Rotary Club of Beenleigh and the Rotary Club of Beenleigh distributes those funds.

Another interesting aspect is that for the first time we had a male winner of the ambassador of the year award. Jason Howitt, sponsored by the Beenleigh Bowls Club and whose charity is beyondblue, was the overall winner of the ambassador of the year. As I mentioned a moment ago, Sharni Willmann was the highest fundraiser and therefore was named charity ambassador. Her charity is Blue Care.

I will list the other contestants and the charities involved. Mikaela Falcone was sponsored by Mitre 10 Beenleigh and her charity was Beenleigh Community Centre. Lyndon Captain was sponsored by Making a Difference, also known as MAD, which is a local charity in its own right. Lyndon Captain's charity was Making a Difference so 75 per cent of his funds raised went to that organisation. Emily Ponton's joint sponsors were Village Cafe, or Beenleigh Historical Village, and the Rocky Point Canegrowers association, and her charity was the Beenleigh Historical Society. Kayla Eley was sponsored by Raine and Horne Beenleigh and her charity was NAPCAN. Tess Haseler was sponsored by Beenleigh Sports Club, which is a community organisation and the beneficiary of 75 per cent of Tess's fundraising. Melina Evans was sponsored by the Beenleigh PCYC, and 75 per cent of her fundraising went to the PCYC. And Lauren Paterson, sponsored by Jetts Fitness Mount Warren Park, was raising funds for school chaplaincy.

The wonderful thing about all of this is that we all have an opportunity in our communities to assist with these types of groups. How did we help? We attended many of the fundraising events, including the one on Saturday night; we donated prizes to events, as others in the community have done; and we promoted the event far and wide as much as we could.

As I said last week, the whole community centred on Beenleigh is a close-knit one and, as such, all facets of the community benefit. I am proud to say that the Rotary Club of Beenleigh has been the driver behind the cane festival for many years and this year has reinvented the festival, resulting in such an outstanding result. I congratulate the Rotary Club of Beenleigh and the committee that managed the new format, all of the ambassadors—in particular Sharni Willmann and Jason Howitt—and the community and charity groups who do so much for our local community.