



Speech by


# Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard Thursday, 31 May 2012

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## CAPTAIN COOK 1770 FESTIVAL

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (9.26 pm): I rise to share with the House the activities of the Discovery Coast region in facilitating the Captain Cook 1770 Festival. The festival has been an annual event for 20 years commemorating the visit of the *Endeavour* and the landing of Lieutenant James Cook and his party on 24 May at the Town of 1770, as it is known today. This was the first landing for Cook and his crew in Queensland. So truly, members here tonight, we claim the birthplace of Queensland, and others will have a fight to take it off me. The festival has won the 2006, 2007 and 2008 Zonal Tourism Awards for the most significant event. In 2009 the festival was also inducted into the Tourism Hall of Fame for the Rockhampton, Gladstone and Bundaberg tourism regional area.

Saturday is the main festival day with live entertainment throughout the day. A special feature of the evening is a spectacular 20-minute fireworks display showering over the bay. While the festival concentrates on the fun aspect, the festival committee is aware of the fact that many Queenslanders have no knowledge of the historical significance of Cook's landing at 1770. The committee wishes to promote and educate visitors of the Indigenous history of the area. The Gooreng Gooreng people are the traditional owners and on the morning of the main festival activities the Gooreng Gooreng dancers, lead by Merv Johnson and his nephews, explain the dreamtime stories of the area and perform traditional dances to the sound of didgeridoos. There is also a re-enactment of Cook's landing with professional actors in period costumes.

The Captain Cook 1770 Festival is well on the way to being a major event on Queensland's tourism calendar. Last week I was honoured as the new member for the Burnett electorate to be asked to participate and officially open the annual Captain Cook 1770 Festival. I am proud to represent the Discovery Coast region that puts so much effort into organising and upholding the remembrance of such a significant day in the history of Queensland and Australia.

The festival is of particular interest as the organisers have structured it to include the entire community in the street parade. Participants and visitors can enjoy many associated events in the lead-up to the festival, including a spectacular art and quilting show, the beer brewing competition and the Captain Cook 1770 Festival Damper Making Competition, in recognition and celebration of Mavis Row, who was well known locally for her delicious dampers and her community work. There have been significant changes to the area since the landing of Captain James Cook in Bustard Bay, but the area has maintained its unique beauty. The Discovery Coast region needs events like the Captain Cook 1770 Festival. After a day of rain, we were all thankful for the fine day that presented last Saturday. The reality is that in this part of the Burnett rain can and does cause significant economic hardship. I thank the Discovery Coast Committee.