



Speech By  
**Craig Crawford**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Meals on Wheels**

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (9.38 pm): A good measure of a successful community is to count the number of volunteers, and in my electorate of Barron River they are in abundance. I was recently invited by Mrs Joann McClure, the President of Marlin Coast Meals on Wheels, to assist in the delivery of meals throughout my electorate. Marlin Coast Meals on Wheels has been delivering nutritious food to frail, aged and younger people with a disability since 1990 and this year celebrates its 25th anniversary.

The group is often contacted by the Cairns Hospital to arrange meals for patients recovering from surgery for up to six to eight weeks. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday a team of volunteers arrives at the kitchens and begins cooking from 6 am to prepare meals for about 70 clients. The meals are then delivered to the clients' homes. The other day I had the privilege of joining Rosie Bennett, a retired nurse on her round. For many clients living alone, the visit from a Meals on Wheels driver can be their only human contact for the week. I know from my work as a paramedic that emergency calls have often come from Meals on Wheels drivers who arrive to find one of their regular clients stuck on the floor or having some sort of medical emergency.

The Meals on Wheels volunteers do not just prepare and deliver meals; they provide much needed social contact to people who may be isolated or lonely as well as monitoring the physical and psychological wellbeing of those who are most vulnerable. Keeping people out of hospital and nursing homes as long as possible means the volunteers are also helping to save tax dollars. A friendly smile, a chat about the weather, a nutritious meal and knowing someone will drop by to say hello has changed the lives of many people and it is not just the clients who value this contact. Ask any of the volunteers and they will tell you that reaching out and making a difference in someone else's day makes their day, too. Anyone who has to live alone at any stage of life would know that finding the motivation to cook well-rounded, nutritious meals can be difficult. Adding to this frailty, physical disability, early dementia or grief after losing a spouse and the shopping, transport and cooking experience can become overwhelming.

Earlier this year during National Volunteer Week I had the privilege of presenting awards at a ceremony organised by FNQ volunteers where a runner-up award was represented to Mrs Margaret Scammell. Margaret has been volunteering her services at Marlin Coast Meals on Wheels for 15 years. She has volunteered in the planning, cooking of meals, administration of run sheets and the delivery of meals as well as tending to the special dietary needs of the clients. Over the years Margaret has also dedicated herself to other volunteer groups including the Red Cross, University of the Third Age and Probus. I would like to encourage people, especially our retirees who still have so much time to give to the community, to consider volunteering for a group like Meals on Wheels.