



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

---

Record of Proceedings, 16 July 2015

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Burdekin Water Festival**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (1.29 am): On 4 July I had the pleasure of launching the 2015 Burdekin Water Festival. The Water Festival is one of the oldest festivals in Queensland, having run continuously for 57 years. It was the dream of Bob Saxby Snr who had been to Toowoomba and had seen the Carnival of Flowers in 1957. Upon his return to Ayr, he went to see the shire chairman, EW Ford, to see what Ayr could do to promote its underground water supply. A public meeting was then called in late 1957 and it is from that meeting that the Ayr Water Festival came about, the first being held in September 1958. The name was later changed to the Burdekin Water Festival to include the whole district in the celebrations.

In 1958, three young ladies vied for the queen's title, with the winner being named the Water Festival Personality Queen. In 1963, the decision was made to include a junior section, the Water Festival Princess. In 1974, the committee of the day decided to reward entrants for their fundraising efforts, creating the Water Festival Charity Queen title. In the 1990s the committee changed the names of these entrants and winners to ambassadors and young ambassadors to allow young men to enter the quest and it now includes a section called Burdekin Blokes. The theme for this year's festival will be It's a Wild and Wonderful World, which gives the ambassadors plenty of scope, as members could imagine. It's a Wild and Wonderful World is about the people and places around us and everything that goes with it.

The festival culminates in the crowning of junior and senior ambassadors, the Burdekin Bloke and a mardi gras and street parade on 5 September. Ambassadors and blokes also stage events throughout the community such as movie premieres, trivia nights and so on. The National Tree Day event is a tradition for ambassadors and blokes to attend to show their support for Landcare and the environment in general. As a community centred on agriculture, initiatives and issues such as this are held dearly by all residents.

The Burdekin Water Festival promotes and supports all participating local organisations, as the festival is a time when locals work together to celebrate this magnificent area of Queensland. The 2015 Burdekin Water Festival ambassadors will enjoy participating in all of the many events that the committee has planned. I pay tribute to past and present committees for the enormous amount of work they put into making this festival the success it is. When you talk about community spirit, the Burdekin has it in spades and this festival brings the community together like no other event to celebrate all the things that make the Burdekin such a great place to live, work and play.