




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

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ADJOURNMENT

Charleville School of Distance Education

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (11.58 pm): I rise to inform the House of an important milestone achieved in education by the Charleville School of Distance Education and school of the air, which last Saturday celebrated 50 years of distance education. As a primary correspondence student from kindy to year 7, I am passionate about distance education. It was an honour to attend the celebrations and catch up with many distance education families. There were several generations of the McInerney family from Morven, the Bredhauer family from Charleville and the Tully family from Quilpie, to name a few. Many past students, teachers and staff travelled back to Charleville.

In 1966 the Charleville School of the Air commenced transmission on 24 January from the Charleville Flying Doctor base using the RFDS HF radio network. The teacher in charge and sole teacher, Anna Andler, had 44 students on her roll. In 1990 following the Charleville flood, the school moved from the RFDS base to its present site co-located with the Charleville high school. There was much loss caused by the flood—curriculum, learning and teaching materials, furniture, clerical and electrical equipment, including personal losses by staff and a muddy flood mess to clean up. Some of the items from the time capsule that were opened at the celebrations still showed a bit of flood mud. However, they survived. In 2001 the HF radio system was decommissioned after permanent approval to utilise telephone teaching. In 2005 the investigation into the use of technology to enhance on-air lessons continued with the trial of interactive distance learning and a higher speed internet, synchronous learning tool used in conjunction with the telephone for on-air lessons. The education delivery mode has evolved from radio to telephone to web conferencing, which is why reliable and affordable internet services are of such importance to distance education families.

I want to thank all the past and present teachers, particularly current principal Jenny Swadling, staff, children, administrators and parents of the Charleville School of Distance Education and school of the air for their passion and enthusiasm for distance education. I also want to thank Julie Hawker and Jennie Bucknell for authoring a wonderful book about 50 years of the Charleville School of Distance Education and school of the air. I will be donating a copy of this book to the Parliamentary Library so that all members can learn more about distance education and share the heartwarming stories of 50 years of inspiring and of a successful education journey—one that I will continue to champion at every opportunity in the future.