




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Mackay Eisteddfod; Shuttlewood, Mrs N

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.12 pm): If you happen to be travelling past the Mackay entertainment centre any time until 23 October you will probably catch a glimpse of dancers, singers, musicians and drama performers all dressed like the superstars they are and shining even brighter. The Mackay Eisteddfod is one of our town's longest and fondest traditions. I was honoured to attend the official opening of this year's 70th anniversary of the eisteddfod. Generations of Mackay locals have participated in the eisteddfod, and some have gone on to become accomplished artists while others have just been in it for the fun of it. I remember my mum sitting in the audience watching me and 36 other 10-year-olds playing the piano. We all played the same tune, but it was in different keys and to varying degrees of ability. I have done the same for my daughter and for my grandchildren, just as countless other proud families have done for the past 70 years. I might be a little biased when I state Mackay's claim as the epicentre for the arts in North Queensland. We are a talented bunch; it is in our DNA and has evolved from generations of performing with fearless enthusiasm and without criticism or expectation. That is the wonderful thing about the eisteddfod, and that is why it is such an important part of our cultural history.

The eisteddfod is an opportunity for everyone from the very young to the very old to express themselves in the performing art of their choice and to be applauded by people from their community who admire and share their passion for performing. Norma Shuttlewood remembers performing at Mackay's first eisteddfod 70 years ago. 91-year-old Mrs Shuttlewood has collected a lifetime's worth of eisteddfod memorabilia which she has stored in six binders and 14 scrapbooks. Mrs Shuttlewood is the proud owner of every Mackay Eisteddfod program since 1947. Her passion for performing in eisteddfods began in early childhood. When she was 10 her mother entered her in the eisteddfod in the Burdekin. Young Norma also sang solo, played the violin and sang with the Home Hill school choir. A decade later Mrs Shuttlewood's singing continued in Mackay at the very first post-Second World War eisteddfod in 1947. Back then there were only four sessions: piano, singing, choral and highland dancing. Today the Mackay Eisteddfod covers most major musical dance disciplines for schools and individuals with contestant age categories ranging from tiny tots to mature aged, motivated, and everything in between.

I would like to wish all the performers and their families and teachers the very best for the remainder of the eisteddfod and I congratulate all involved for their dedication and hard work.