



Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Octopus Foundation

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.33 pm): Sometimes we need to be a little bit brave to be a member of parliament. The Golden Octopus Foundation was established in 2015 by a brave, caring and resilient young lady, Ms Keely Johnson. Throughout her own journey with childhood cancer, Keely aims to help others and make a difference to other children and families dealing with childhood cancer. Keely is achieving this through her Golden Octopus Foundation, which has now gone national. September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, you know me; I am very happy to support any worthwhile cause, particularly if it is born in North Queensland. I am standing in this House in a gold suit to pay tribute to, and raise awareness of, the Golden Octopus Foundation, to Keely and her family for her outstanding work with the foundation. Mr Deputy Speaker, for a few minutes perhaps you can refer to me as 'Gold Member'.

Keely's family, who live in the Burdekin, have been committed to the foundation and do a remarkable amount of work and travel getting out to regional communities and interstate to talk about the foundation and its good work. I have met Keely on numerous occasions with her work, including at meetings at the Townsville Hospital regarding how she can support paediatric oncology services through raising funds for the first community based childhood cancer nurse. They have already raised \$150,000 towards this, but in a remarkable achievement Keely has already raised \$650,000 for this cause.

I would like to give Keely a shout-out. I know she is watching this with her mum, Cathy, in the Burdekin, a nurse who knows how much work the foundation and Keely are doing. I say: well done, mate; you are indeed a shining light. No-one wants to see their child go through any cancer treatment. My observation of Keely is that she is an outstanding young lady who puts herself before others. I would like to commend the Premier for her ongoing support of the foundation by once again agreeing to light up the Queensland parliament in gold this September. I know she is writing to all her local governments to ask them to do the same thing in their area. I am aware that Keely is travelling to Western Australia on the 10th of this month—and they are also lighting up their parliament in gold—to meet children with cancer and cheer them up.

Keely has a special talent and that is her golden voice. This girl can sing. The ambassador for the Golden Octopus Foundation is Mr Lee Kernaghan who, along with Keely, recorded the song *Turn This to Gold*. All funds raised are delivered to regional hospitals such as in Townsville. This foundation raises funds for improving the services of paediatric oncology such as telehealth to regional areas to prevent families having to travel so far from home in stressful times. I only ask that members of this House google the Golden Octopus Foundation and make a donation because that's gold.