




Speech By
Colin Boyce

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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ADJOURNMENT

Baralaba

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (7.17 pm): On the north-west tip of the Callide electorate on the banks of the mighty Dawson River is the tiny town of Baralaba. It is home to about 300 people, but it lives in the hearts of thousands. This was evident at the recent centenary of the Baralaba State School, when the population more than tripled with past families, staff and students travelling from far and wide to attend the celebrations.

The township started when the Dawson River Anthracite Prospecting Company commenced prospecting for coal in 1901. With the growth of the township by 1917, the department of public instruction agreed to the opening of a provincial school if parents could provide a tent in which to hold classes. The Baralaba Provincial School—known as the tent school—officially opened on 19 August 1918, with 11 children in attendance. The second-hand tent itself lasted until 1921 when it suffered damage in a storm, and classes had to move to the nearby railway goods shed. One hundred years later, Baralaba State School is a prep to year 10 school with 99 students. It is well resourced and equipped with over 20 staff to support the education of our next generation.

The Baralaba area was originally home to the Gangulu and Wadja people. Examples of their artwork can be found along the Dawson Range, which was mostly inhabited by the Wadja people. The school centenary celebrations included the Kulgoodah Dancers from Woorabinda, 40 kilometres from Baralaba, part of the neighbouring Gregory electorate. Kulgoodah Dancers performed in a smoking ceremony with Gold Coast artist Luther Cora at the opening of the Commonwealth Games at the Gold Coast in April this year. Baralaba has always maintained close ties with Woorabinda, adding a school bus run in 1965, when the secondary school opened—a bus run that continues to this day.

Baralaba's economy revolves around farming and coalmining. The Neville Hewitt Weir boosts the prosperity of the area by providing storage for 10,000 megalitres of water for irrigated agriculture and provides water security for the town and the mining industry. I wish the school and the Baralaba community well for the next 100 years.