




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 8 March 2018

ADJOURNMENT

Giles, Ms M

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (6.22 pm): I rise to acknowledge Michelle Giles, a well-known and highly respected schoolteacher from my electorate of Gladstone who last year was the Queensland Teachers' Union recipient of the prestigious Emma Miller Award. As today is International Women's Day, it is particularly meaningful to acknowledge Michelle and have her join us in the gallery. Michelle is here with her husband, Kevin, and her daughter, Suzanne. The coveted Emma Miller Award is recognition of the highest order by the Queensland Council of Unions celebrating the commitment and achievements of rank and file union women in Queensland.

Michelle was born in Mount Morgan in 1957. Her father was a miner and her mother worked in the office of Mount Morgan Mine. Michelle proudly speaks of having inherited Labor values and having working-class DNA from her parents. When Michelle was 10 years old, her family moved to Gladstone and she attended Gladstone West State School and Gladstone State High School. Michelle completed her teaching qualifications at Mount Gravatt Teachers' College and during those tertiary years she joined the student union.

After graduating in 1978, Michelle began her teaching career at Clinton State School in Gladstone, where she remained for four years. In 1983, a departmental transfer took her to Palm Beach State School, where she became the QTU workplace delegate and began her representative skills in the industrial activism area. That same year she married Kevin Giles, who also is a teacher and a proud union activist. When Michelle accepted her Emma Miller Award recently, she was described as—

... an active member of the QTU since she joined in 1983. She has been involved in the Union's Campaign Action Group and been an active participant in EBs, State elections, Federal elections, Gonski campaigns and teacher accommodation changes.

Michelle is well respected in all facets of the QTU. She is key to QTU activism in Gladstone—

and so is her husband—

She has mentored the engagement of new activists and stood aside to create opportunities for other women and less experienced activists while continuing to mentor and guide them.

She is a fierce protector of Union members and workers rights.

At the time Michelle received her award, her union involvement included being a workplace representative, the Port Curtis branch president, a state council representative for the Port Curtis QTU branch and a member of the accommodation committee. The recipients of the Emma Miller Award are activists who work every day with the ultimate aim of improving their own lives, the lives of their families, the lives of workers everywhere, and their communities.

As do all Emma Miller Award recipients, I know that Michelle will wear her hatpin with immense pride. She will be well respected in our community, as she has always been. Well done, comrade, on your achievements.