




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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ADJOURNMENT

Central Queensland University, Companion of the University

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (7.28 pm): It gives me great pleasure tonight to be able to share with the House two very valued members of the Mackay wider community. Last Friday I joined with the parents and friends of graduates from the Central Queensland University Mackay campus. Congratulations to all students for your hard work. It has finally paid off for you.

There were two special recipients of the honorary award of Companion of the University. Both recipients contributed not only to the academic life of Mackay but also to the economy, social and welfare of our community. Dr Victor Mason is well known in our community for his work, particularly in the West Mackay Rotary Club. He is not shy to roll up his sleeves and support the club's large popular Christmas fairs.

Vic has had a distinguished career in the Australian sugar industry—over 26 years. He has worked in the Sugar Research Institute from 1976, holding positions including chief research engineer, manager of the Engineering Research Unit and research manager. In the 1990s Victor played a significant role in transforming the institution into a modern commercial research model.

Vic has interacted with technical staff at sugar mills across Queensland and New South Wales. Vic's research has also extended to international sugar through the International Society of Sugar Cane Technologists. He has also had over 10 years of involvement with CQUniversity, assisting in driving the strategic direction of the university.

The other recipient was Brian O'Neill. He has had over 30 years of experience as an educator and for the past 18 years has been the principal of Calen District State College—and this is how I got to know Brian and his family. Calen District State College punches well above its weight in the education arena. It is one of the smallest schools in the state but it has the biggest results.

Brian forged a relationship between the school and CQUniversity through its promotion of the Start Uni Now program—SUN. The SUN program is a CQUniversity initiative that allows students in years 10, 11 and 12 to study units while still being at school. Brian also works as a casual lecturer at the university to ensure quality training for beginning teachers.

Brian, as President of the Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia, has hosted the 32nd prestigious annual conference. He attracted speakers from Norway, Finland, Mexico, New Zealand, the USA, Canada and Argentina. In my experience as a QUTU organiser, Brian is the only principal I have ever come across where the regional executive director has had to direct him to stop working so hard. Congratulations to both Dr Victor Mason and Brian O'Neill on their well-deserved awards—Companion of the University.

(Time expired)