



Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR MACALISTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 November 2018

## ADJOURNMENT

### McHappy Day; World Prematurity Day

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (7.25 pm): This weekend there are two event days that I would like to acknowledge here in the House. They are celebrated Australia wide and specifically in my own family. The first is McHappy Day this Saturday, 17 November. I know many members in this House will be spending some time on Saturday at their local Maccas flipping burgers, helping out on the drive-through and serving at the McCafe. The amount of \$2 from every Big Mac sold will go to Ronald McDonald House Charities. If a Big Mac is not your thing, you can always purchase some McHappy Day socks.

Last year more than \$42 million was raised on McHappy Day Australia wide. The services provided by Ronald McDonald houses are vital to states as large and geographically dispersed as Queensland. I spent a lot of time raising money for Ronald McDonald houses well before I had kids, little suspecting that I would one day come to call a Ronald McDonald house home, even if just for a short time. On Christmas 2013 I found myself a long way from home relying on the hospitality of the Ronald McDonald House team at Alder Hey, the site of Europe's largest children's hospital. They did not care where I was from, what I did for a living or why I came to be in such a precarious position—just that I needed to be nearer to my boy when he underwent surgery.

This Saturday, 17 November, also happens to coincide with World Prematurity Day. This day is globally acknowledged to increase awareness of pre-term births as well as deaths. More than 25,000 babies are born pre-term—that is before 37 weeks—in Australia. That is almost one in 10. On World Prematurity Day, families and organisations are invited to hashtag 'light it purple' or to simply light a candle in recognition of the struggles that these little lives face and at times lose.

Having a baby born too early is a significant trauma for families. The first step to combatting this high rate of prematurity is to increase information available to parents but also to improve treatment and care to provide better outcomes following pre-term births. I cannot call into question the amazing work that our medical staff do in our Queensland hospitals providing first-class health services, but I would encourage the health minister to look at the research now available that identifies interventions that can be applied to combat the massive overrepresentation of NICU families in depression and PTSD rates.

World Prematurity Day is part of the larger Neonatal Intensive Care Awareness Month. It also includes a 'Thank U NICU Day'. I would encourage all members to make contact with their nearest NICU, neonatal intensive care unit, to see how they can help celebrate this month and pay tribute to the staff. The time spent in an NICU is not only traumatic for families but also isolating, not just physically but also emotionally. Reaching out to these families who will likely feel alone and lost and also acknowledging the tireless work of NICU doctors, nurses and midwives is an important part of the month.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the families currently going through this tough time and salute the NICU staff who will guide them through the roller-coaster ride. I recommend that all members do the same.