




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Slater Clifton-Walker

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.00 pm): I take the time tonight to remember a local Labrador boy, Slater Clifton-Walker. Slater was diagnosed with brain cancer at just 17 months of age. His type of tumour accounted for just six per cent of childhood brain tumours affecting one in 1.4 million children—and everyone who met him could see that he was one in a million in so many ways, more than just this. Slater faced invasive, intensive and even experimental treatments and medication to reduce the tumour, leaving him with significant side effects, but he was given a 10 per cent to 20 per cent chance of living to his seventh birthday. Tragically, he passed away on 11 August aged just 6½. He lived every single day of that to the fullest though. Even in his final months when he had lost his hearing, he would wake up each day singing.

I had the honour of knowing Slater for the last few years. He was a cheeky little kid with a great sense of humour. In 2019 he was the Face of Relay for the Cancer Council's Relay for Life, bringing joy to everyone with the Ninja Turtle moves he pulled on his lap around the oval. He started school at Musgrave Hill State School this year and made an immediate impact on the staff, students and school community there. Earlier this year they ran a Hero Day for Slater with all of the proceeds going to paediatric brain cancer research at the Children's Brain Cancer Centre. His class, Prep Silver, alone raised \$3,605 for this important cause and the school overall raised over \$20,000. It was truly a special day for Slater and I am so glad he got to see it.

Slater had an amazing support team around him and I want to put some of their names on the record of this parliament: his oncologist and co-founder of the Children's Brain Cancer Centre, Dr Timothy Hassall; his clinical nurse consultants Brooke Spencer and Michelle Noyes; his allied health team Hayley Coulson, Ashlyn Harrop and Anshu Shama; social worker Ruth Granata; GPs Dr James Hudson and Dr Brian Cheong, who first found his tumour; the staff of the Queensland Children's Hospital, the Children's Hospital Foundation and our own Gold Coast University Hospital who were absolutely exceptional; and the amazing educators at Musgrave Hill State School, in particular Luke, Brooke, his teacher Amy and teacher aide Jen. Thank you to you all and to everyone else who has been there for Slater.

Bianca, Slater's mum, is also a hero. She has gone through every treatment with him and is now dealing with the unimaginable grief of losing a child. Our community stands with her and all of Slater's family. One Australian child will die from brain cancer every nine days and my hope is that through Slater's story, his courage and his fundraising efforts we will see that number come down. Goodbye, brave little boy. You will be missed but not forgotten.