




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 20 April 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Wood, Mr J

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.12 pm): I rise this evening to honour an outstanding achievement by an inspiring individual who lives in the Chatsworth electorate. When I was first elected in 2012 I had the pleasure of meeting many incredible people. One I remember distinctly was Joshua Wood. Around seven years old at the time, I instantly knew Josh was an exceptional young boy. It was a pleasure to help organise for him necessary educational resources. I acknowledge the then education minister, John-Paul Langbroek.

Joshua was born with a rare retinal condition and uses braille to read. His condition has never stopped him in the slightest and I was blown away with his intelligence and his compassion for others when we met. Notwithstanding his limited vision he was fixated on Minecraft. Now 13 years old, I have seen Joshua grow into a young man who has an incredible talent when it comes to writing. He has received recognition in several prestigious writing competitions over the years, including a special commendation in the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition in 2017, when he was flown to London to visit Buckingham Palace. In addition to this, he also received a special commendation in the Foyle Young Poet Competition in 2019 when he was again invited to London to attend the award ceremony.

As for his latest achievement, in 2021 Joshua has been awarded the grand prize in the prestigious Lions Clubs International Peace Essay Contest which gives young people with visual impairment an opportunity to express their feelings of peace. This year's theme was peace through service and throughout Joshua's essay titled 'Peace and service go hand in hand' he explored the idea of peace through the eyes of his grandfather and the stories he told about what it means to serve others. Joshua's essay is truly moving and one that captured the hearts of many people.

In previous years winners of this contest were flown to New York with their family and the local Lions club representative to present their essay as part of Lions Day with the United Nations. I am saddened Joshua was unable to embark on this trip of a lifetime due to COVID. However, he still presented his essay with pride virtually on Lions Day. You can watch and listen to Joshua's essay on Lions Australia Facebook page. I believe Joshua sends a powerful message to others and explains that he hopes his essay encourages others to help people despite difficulties that they may face. He believes in the peace essay being important because it encourages people to not only think about peace but also think about how to achieve it.

On behalf of the Chatsworth community I want to say a massive congratulations to Joshua on this extraordinary achievement, as well as his sponsoring club, the Camp Hill Carindale Lions Club, for allowing Joshua the opportunity to participate in this global event. It has indeed been inspiring to witness Joshua grow and achieve incredible things over the years. I am looking forward to seeing what the future holds for this exciting young gentleman.