




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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ADJOURNMENT

Australian Trade College North Brisbane

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (7.22 pm): I want to talk about the difference that education and flexible learning makes. Last Thursday I had the privilege of attending the Australian Trade College North Brisbane's annual awards and the year 12 graduation where we heard from Caleb, who spoke on behalf of the year 12 cohort. Caleb has just completed his schooling and, with the support of the Australian Trade College, secured a school-based apprenticeship in May at Brisbane Yamaha at Burpengary and commenced a Certificate III in Marine Mechanical Technology. I was so moved by Caleb's speech that I asked if I could read an extract from it for tonight's adjournment. Caleb said—

I was a troubled kid back in the day, mum you can back me there. Suspensions and detentions were a regular occurrence for Caleb. The only clean sweep I've had has been the last two years I've been here at Australian Trade College. Honestly, it's the school. The school was right for me, it kept me out of trouble and pushed me to a goal I wanted to reach. And with the right people at the tips of my fingers it became a reality along with I'm sure plenty of other students here tonight.

The shaping of my journey to become the man I am today also came from many people outside the school community. As many of you may know, I'm a race car driver traveling Australia often. Poppy Pete, who when I first met him was just a random person asking me questions about my racing, played a huge part in my journey. Little did I know he was fighting cancer and didn't have long left. Poppy Pete was a smart man and had raced nearly every car in the book. He was a racing legend. He travelled with us and lent his knowledge wherever he could. He chose to help a young person chase the same goal he had when he was my age. One thing Poppy Pete taught me was that kindness doesn't always have to be in a physical form.

Which led to my next journey. I had received, and now I wanted to give. Give kindness to the knowledgeable. I towed my race car down to the local retirement home where I spoke to many elderly people about my journey through racing. I spoke to them for hours and hours on end. I was rich. Not money rich but happy rich.

My next journey involved yes, that filthy mullet. Believe it or not that hair meant a lot to me, but at the cost of showing the love I have for my best mate it meant nothing in the long run. My best mate Charlie was diagnosed with cancer not long after my retirement home journey. Myself and a couple of others came together to show our respect and shave our heads with him. I nearly cried cutting it off.

Year 12s, if you can take a few key messages from my speech I want it to be that being rich in yourself is not always money and physical objects, it's the good deeds, the wonderful people you meet along your journey, the legacy you leave behind and the happiness you bring to others.

Caleb's story is that children who are disengaging still want to learn. They just need the pathways to get there.