



Speech By
Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 16 September 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Whitsunday Electorate

 **Hon. AJ CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.02 pm): This year is significant in milestones for two of my local schools. I was very pleased to attend St Catherine's college, which held a week of commemorative events which was officially launched on 27 July. A highlight of the day was a roll call of past and present students and a cake-cutting ceremony which featured St Catherine's oldest living alumni, Verona Dinnie, aged 92, and current student Mia Penglase-Fortunato, aged five. It was sad in our community of Proserpine that Mrs Dinnie sadly passed away two weeks after the celebration. Her family said that Verona had been greatly looking forward to the 100-year celebrations and had rallied herself from her hospital bed in order to attend. Another memorable moment was the gathering together of some of the school's past students, now in their 90s. Many are dear to my heart including Margaret Faust, Mavis Camm, Diana Crossley, Kay Pini, Verona Dinnie and Father Bill Bussettin. My mother and many of her family members attended St Catherine's college.

I was also pleased to attend Calen District State College, which is a combination of a number of small country schools that came together over the last 100 years, including Ellery State School and Cameron's Pocket State School, which are no longer in existence, and there are many more. What was incredible at that event was the commemorative plaque, which I was very pleased to unveil with the new principal, Ms Tamra Murray, who has joined our community from the Gold Coast. It is fabulous to have her and her husband in our country community of Calen. I was also honoured to be joined by former principal Brian O'Neill, who was my former year 12 English teacher. He has served a quarter of a century—25 years—at Calen State District College and it was a real honour to be alongside him that day. There were many memorable displays and a rich history which culminated in Isabella Dunn, our oldest past student, who is now in her nineties, and Connor Kuhrt, who is the youngest student at age five, coming together to cut the cake.

While I have a moment I would like to acknowledge Deb Friend, who has retired the *Whitsunday News*, a local community paper she has produced and edited for five years after the closure of many of our papers, including the *Whitsunday Times* and the *Proserpine Guardian*. She and her husband, Carl, were a force to be reckoned with when it comes to establishing community news. It was a joint partnership effort. Her contribution in a fair, balanced and accurate way, telling the stories of our community, will be sadly missed and we wish her well in her next chapter.