

Speech By

Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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ADJOURNMENT

BUSHKids

Dr ROWAN (Moggill—LNP) (11.48 pm): I rise to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution of BUSHKids, an organisation that for more than 90 years has supported the health and wellbeing of children and families across regional, rural and remote Queensland. The story of BUSHKids is very much a Queensland story. The Royal Queensland Bush Children's Health Scheme was established in 1935 at the instigation of the then governor of Queensland, Sir Leslie Wilson. During his travels throughout western Queensland, Sir Leslie witnessed firsthand the profound challenges confronting families during the Great Depression and prolonged drought. He was particularly concerned by the poor health of many children and the enormous distances separating families from medical care. From those beginnings came an organisation dedicated to ensuring that children living in the bush were not disadvantaged simply because of where they lived.

Initially, children aged between five and 13 travelled from rural communities for six-week stays at coastal homes where they received nutritious food, medical and dental care, and respite from the difficult conditions of outback life. Over time, BUSHKids evolved alongside the needs of Queensland families. It pioneered in-house speech pathology services in the 1960s and progressively expanded its allied health and developmental services. Today, its multidisciplinary teams provide early intervention, allied health and family support to regional centres, outreach and telehealth. Across its 90-year history, BUSHKids has helped more than 42,000 Queensland children and their families.

One particularly significant part of this history has been the enduring relationship between BUSHKids and the Office of the Governor of Queensland. Sir Leslie Wilson served as the organisation's first president and patron, and every successive governor of Queensland has continued that patronage. Today, BUSHKids has been fortunate to have as its patron Her Excellency the Hon. Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, Governor of Queensland. Her Excellency's extraordinary record of public service to Queenslanders, including her distinguished contribution to public health and now her service as governor, is well known. Her continued support for BUSHKids is a fitting continuation of a relationship stretching back to the organisation's very foundation.

As a former president of the Australian Medical Association of Queensland and the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland, I have certainly seen and been aware of the important contribution that BUSHKids makes to Queensland. I know many members are looking forward to a special BUSHKids event being held tomorrow on the Speaker's Green here at the parliament. It will provide another opportunity to recognise the organisation, its supporters and the many people who continue to champion better outcomes for children and families throughout Queensland.

Over more than 90 years, the way BUSHKids delivers its services may have changed considerably but its fundamental purpose has endured. Well done to all. I congratulate CEO Carlton Meyn, staff, volunteers, supporters and partners as well as the Hon. Jane Prentice who have continued this important legacy. Well done and congratulations to the entire BUSHKids organisation.