

Speech By

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MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

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ADJOURNMENT

Hinchinbrook Electorate

Mr CHIESA (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.26 pm): As Queenslanders prepare to celebrate Queensland Day this Saturday, it is a fitting time to reflect on what makes our state so special. For me the answer is simple: it is our people. One of the great privileges of representing the people of Hinchinbrook is seeing firsthand the individuals, organisations and volunteers who quietly make our communities stronger every day.

Over the past few weeks I have attended events that, while very different, all reflected the values that define Queensland: service, resilience, generosity and a commitment to future generations. I recently had the privilege of emceeing both the annual Red Shield Appeal business breakfast in Townsville and the Herbert River Canegrowers centenary celebrations. One brought together hundreds of people to support the Salvos; the other celebrated 100 years of an industry that helped build the economy and identity of the Herbert River district.

At first glance these events may seem very different, yet both were celebrations of service—one recognised those supporting our most vulnerable members of our community today, while the other honoured generations of farming families whose hard work has sustained North Queensland for a century. Both were reminders that strong communities are built on people who give back, look after one another and leave something better for those who follow.

I have also enjoyed visiting schools across the electorate including St Peter's Catholic School in Halifax; Gilroy Santa Maria College, where they wanted to talk about the Premier; North Shore State School; and Ingham State High School. Meeting students and hearing their ideas is always one of the most rewarding parts of this role. Their confidence, curiosity and enthusiasm for the future should all give us optimism. These young Queenslanders are already thinking about the future of their communities, their careers and the contribution they can make to their own patch.

A particular highlight was opening the renovated tuckshop at Ingham State High School. My mother served as a tuckshop convenor there for 21 years and still going, following her sister—my Aunty Chris—who served for 20 years before her. They have kept generations well fed and ready to learn. It was a reminder that strong communities are often built by people who simply keep turning up year after year.

On Saturday evening I attended the Ingham Catholic Debutante Ball. It is wonderful to see so many young people celebrating an important milestone surrounded by proud parents, families and friends. Events like these remind us of the strength of our community traditions and the important role families and community organisations play in helping young people grow into confident young adults and future leaders.

As Queensland Day approaches, I also look forward to attending tomorrow night the Townsville Hospital and Health Service Staff Excellence Awards, recognising healthcare professionals who dedicate their lives to caring for others. It is important that we acknowledge and celebrate those whose commitment improves the lives of people right across North Queensland.

From volunteers and healthcare workers to canegrowers, teachers, parents and students, I have been reminded why Hinchinbrook is such a wonderful place to call home. When we celebrate Queensland Day this weekend, we will celebrate the history of our state, but it is people like these who are writing its future.