

**Kids in Community (Proof)****Kids in Community**

Extract from NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard and Papers Friday 3 April 2009 (Proof).

**KIDS IN COMMUNITY**

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**Mr THOMAS GEORGE** (Lismore) [11.56 a.m.]: It is great to hear stories such as the one we have just heard. Today I pay tribute to Kids in Community—an organisation in my electorate that is actively making a difference—which had its media launch this week during Youth Week. I recognise the wonderful contribution that this organisation makes to our community. Each year Kids in Community has an awards night. Rachel Ward is the patron of Kids in Community. Earlier this week I spoke to the Minister for Youth and told him that Rachel Ward, the President and I would like to see him to explore what support could be afforded to this group.

Kids in Community recognises and rewards young people for their positive efforts in addressing issues that affect them and others. It highlights the important role of youth in building strong communities within our region. It also provides an opportunity for individuals, parents, carers, extended family members, community groups, organisations and businesses to participate in an event that expresses appreciation for the positive actions of our youth. The whole community benefits through encouraging young people, and raising awareness of how positive actions and attitudes benefit young people and the community. Kids in Community raises public awareness and calls attention to local issues affecting youth, creating an opportunity for community involvement.

I acknowledge the role played by the major sponsors, which include the Catholic Diocese of Lismore. Other sponsors include Bennett Constructions, the Centre for Children and Young People, Lismore Workers Club, L. J. Hooker, Prime, 900 2LM, ZZZ FM, Richard Marlin's SMA Black Belt Academy, Southern Cross University, the *Koori Mail*, the *Echo*, the *Northern Star*, TMG Computing, the Southern Cross Credit Union, Thomas Noble Russell, and Trenches McKenzie Cox Solicitors. These organisations are major supporters of Kids in Community, which has been operating for nine years. As I said earlier, Kids in Community had its media launch this week and its awards night will be held in July. I hope that the Minister will accept the invitation to attend that presentation. On the night, 500 or 600 people will get together to recognise the contribution of our young people to the northern rivers area and to the region surrounding Lismore.

I thank Des Kelly, president, for his leadership; his hardworking wife, Maria Kelly, secretary; and Margaret Orr, who has worked with the organisation since its inception. They, together with committee members, have been the driving force of Kids in Community. I am proud to say that my wife, Deborah, joined the committee this year. Kids in Community does a fantastic job making representations to youth organisations, schools and the community and asking them to recognise the contribution of youth in their organisations and their schools. As I said, Rachel Ward is the patron—and a very proud patron. Over the years she has hosted a week in Sydney to give kids an insight into activities in the city. She has offered tremendous support to the organisation and her efforts are greatly appreciated. Other guests over the years have included local girl Sally Hunt. She was the winner in category two in 2006. Anh Do was guest speaker at the awards in 2007, and he said:

The Kids in Community event is one of most inspiring, uplifting and heartwarming experiences I have witnessed in my entire lifetime.

People who visit the organisation and see what is being done in a practical sense appreciate the benefits of the program. I pay tribute to Kids in Community for actively making a difference within the community for our kids.