



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMETARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

**Leichhardt Electorate:
Cooktown Discovery Festival**

SPEECH

Tuesday, 27 March 2018

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Questioner	Responder
Speaker Entsch, Warren, MP	Question No.

Mr ENTSCH (Leichhardt) (19:55): I rise today to bring to the attention of the House a very special anniversary happening in a town in my electorate, Cooktown, in 2020. On 17 June 1770, His Majesty's bark the *Endeavour*, captained by Lieutenant James Cook, found refuge at the mouth of the Waalumbaal Birri, now known as the Endeavour River, after suffering severe damage when it struck the Great Barrier Reef. The crew, comprised of 86 men, spent 48 days in what was later to be named Cook's Town. This was the longest and most significant land based stay during Cook's east coast expedition, 18 years before the First Fleet sailed into Botany Bay. It was a period of extraordinary discoveries and significant contact with the Guugu Yimidhir and Kuku Yalanji people of the area. Despite Cook's scientific discoveries, it was the interactions with Guugu Yimidhir people that were most poignant. There were eight interactions in total. Genuine communication was established between the parties. However, a rift between the parties eventuated over the capture of turtles and Captain Cook's men's refusal to share the spoils. The wisdom of an elder ensured the rift was quickly sorted out. This moment has since become known as the first recorded act of reconciliation and was recorded with the presentation of a broken spear tip.

Each year the Cooktown Discovery Festival is a major event on the regional calendar. It features the annual re-enactment of Cook's landing and interactions with the Guugu Yimidhir people. In 2018 and 2019, the discovery festival program will be extended to accommodate some of the proposed Cooktown 2020 festivities. Cooktown 2020 is a visionary 48-day festival celebrating the arrival of James Cook 250 years earlier. The 48-day festival highlights the 48 days that Captain Cook and his men spent onshore.

Last week, I met with the Cooktown 2020 advisory committee, and some of the events they have planned are certainly very exciting. Some of the highlights of the proposed program include a possible royal visit, HMAS *Endeavour* tours, historical re-enactments, opera in the park, Indigenous art fairs, a tropical tropfest and a remembrance ceremony. Other events include a mayoral ball, and they're encouraging participants to attend in period dress, so I think it'll be a gala event in a wonderful little town called Cooktown. Certainly, my beautiful wife and I intend to be there to attend that event. There will also be a historic Twenty20 England versus Australia cricket match. I can assure you that, when they're playing that game, we'll keep a very close eye on the ball!

I urge all levels of government to get behind this historic event. It is a very, very special one. Most people are unaware of the historical significance of Cooktown. There are a whole lot of things. This is where Cook first saw a kangaroo. It's where Banks recorded a whole lot of flora and fauna during the time that they were there. So there is a lot of history there. I know that the National Maritime Museum and a range of others are very keen to look into it, but I encourage all levels of government to get behind this event. It is very significant in our community. I also urge my colleagues, on both sides of the House, to maybe plan a week away in Cooktown to support the community and to take part in a little bit of what has been very significant history.

House adjourned at 20:00