



SPEECH

CRAIG EMERSON

Member for Rankin

16 August 2007

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS Congenital Heart Defect

Dr EMERSON (Rankin) (9.30 a.m.)—I want to speak today about a special Australian, Logan City student Paige Robertson. At the tender age of 14, Paige has a greater appreciation of life than most people in our generation. Paige has congenital heart defect and has had open-heart surgery four times. She has had closed-heart surgery twice. She has survived bacterial endocarditis, which is a life-threatening infection that attacks the heart. Not content just to be a survivor, Paige has made it her mission to help other kids with heart conditions. Paige is the founder and president of Heartkids Queensland support group, Kidz 4 Heartkidz, and was Logan's young citizen of the year in 2007. Paige raises funds to assist children suffering with congenital heart complaints, to help them fulfil their own little wishes. Her latest initiative is called Wish you Well. It raised enough funds to present Julian Summers, a Groves Christian College year 1 pupil, with a laptop computer to help him work while away from school due to his condition. Paige is a true visionary. She is an example of what one young person can do to make a difference to so many young lives.

When I say 'many lives', I mean it. We need only look at the facts. One in 100 children is born with a congenital heart defect. That is just over 2,000 children a year. Congenital heart defect is the No. 1 cause of child death. Congenital heart defects can never be completely cured and, sadly, for many they can never be treated. Paige has been through the system and wants to make a difference to kids' lives. She has initiated several programs for kids and their siblings to make their struggle just a little bit happier. One of these initiatives is Heartkidz cams. Paige wants to supply every CHD kid with a Heartkidz cam so they can interact with their teachers and friends while in treatment at home. Contact with friends and, yes, even teachers gives kids the hope that they are not alone in their struggle. I would recommend that if the government is prepared to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on marginal seats in the lead-up to the election it could afford to spare the money to make one girl's vision come true. At 14 years of age, Paige Robertson is truly an inspirational young Australian.