



Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Parliament of Queensland

Media Statement

Monday 18 July 2011

STUDENTS ACKNOWLEDGE NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Nelson Mandela's contribution to peace and democracy was acknowledged by students at Parliament House today.

The students from Glenmore State High School in Rockhampton learned about the life of the former South African President during their visit to the Parliament which coincided with Nelson Mandela International Day.

In November 2009, the United Nations' General Assembly declared 18 July, which is Mandela's birthday – he turns 93 today – as Nelson Mandela International Day.

The students were welcomed to the Parliament by Deputy Speaker, Di Farmer MP who spoke of Nelson Mandela's contribution to peace and democracy.

"The Parliament is a fitting venue to commemorate and celebrate Nelson Mandela International Day, because of its central importance to democracy right here where we live.

"When we think of Mandela's achievements and contribution, his example is one that can inspire us to make our own individual contribution to the causes he championed.

"As one of the world's most respected statesmen, he is a fitting role model for those who are committed to the goals of peace, reconciliation, human rights, and democratic rights and freedoms," Ms Farmer said.

Student leaders from Glenmore State High School then spoke about issues of importance to them. Ms Tahlia Drury and Ms Katrina Hall each called for Australia to adopt a Bill of Rights so as to better protect the rights of Australians.

Ms Farmer encouraged the students to participate in the democratic system by enrolling to vote and by being informed about public issues.

"I urge you to be conscious of the difference that one person can make, as exemplified by the life of Nelson Mandela, and then to consider the difference that the combined contributions of a small group of people might make, and then scale that up to dozens of people, and up again to hundreds of people, to thousands of people.

"It is in that way that enormous tasks can be accomplished and seemingly insurmountable obstacles can be overcome. I urge you to consider how change can start with you at the individual level, and can grow from there or join with the efforts and contributions of others."

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