



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Wednesday, 23 March 2011

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE WILLIAM; BALL, MRS S

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.22 pm): Life often throws up many ironies. Last Saturday, my electorate welcomed His Royal Highness Prince William, who visited the cyclone affected towns of Tully and Cardwell. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to meet the Prince, who is a real gentleman. He expressed genuine concern for the welfare and circumstances of the people of North Queensland who were affected by Cyclone Yasi. His Royal Highness asked several questions about the extent of the damage to communities in my electorate and the progress of the recovery effort. I thanked His Royal Highness for demonstrating a commitment to duty and service by travelling to communities in North Queensland in the wake of the cyclone.

Certainly, Prince William's visit boosted our spirits during a very difficult time. It was wonderful to see such large and enthusiastic crowds assembled in both Cardwell and Tully. I was extremely proud to see the positive attitude and respect shown for the Prince during his visit by local residents and visitors alike. After several weeks of misery and depression associated with the impact of Cyclone Yasi and the unrelenting wet weather that has plagued communities in my electorate, it was marvellous to see my constituents smiling, cheering and laughing amongst themselves. I am very proud to be a strong, card-carrying constitutional monarchist. While I was personally delighted to welcome our future monarch to my electorate, the most important thing the Prince brought to the Tully and Cardwell districts last Saturday was a brief window of time where we put our worries and burdens to one side.

Last Monday, I had the sad duty of delivering the eulogy at the funeral of a long-standing friend of my family, Mrs Stella Ball nee Phelan. Stella fell just short of 93 years of age, passing away on 15 March. Stella was born in 1918 in Kilcullen, County Kildare, Ireland. At the time of Stella's birth, Irish rebels were fighting for independence from Britain and the Black and Tans—troops bought over to help quell the rebellion—occupied villages like Kilcullen. One soldier approached a three-year-old Stella and asked her name. Phelan family folklore insists Stella shot back, 'Stella Phelan and I'm a Sinn Feiner.'

When she was still an infant, Stella's family left Ireland to come to Australia, arriving in the Burdekin district in North Queensland in 1922. In 1942, with World War II in full swing, Stella moved to Tully to work in the Mount Tyson Hotel as a barmaid. She often joked that while many people were moving south in anticipation of a Japanese invasion, she was moving north to meet them head on. Born in the Emerald Isle and being a Sinn Feiner, of course Stella was a strong Catholic. Stella often claimed that she was the only barmaid in North Queensland that knew all of the responses to the Latin mass off by heart in Latin. Indeed, 'stella' is the Latin word for star. Stella Ball was a star and will be sadly missed by her family, my family and her many friends. The irony of warmly welcoming His Royal Highness, Prince William, our future monarch on Saturday and delivering the eulogy of Stella Ball, a Catholic Sinn Feiner, on Monday was not lost on me.

(Time expired)