



BERT VAN MANEN MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FORDE

New Recipient & Student Leaders' Celebration

[3 MINUTE STATEMENT]

Speaker, I begin today by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to Elders past and present. I extend that respect also to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.

Last week, I had the privilege to be asked to attend the New Recipient and Student Leaders' Celebration at Griffith University's Logan Campus in my electorate hosted by QATSIF.

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation provides educational scholarships of around \$2000 across Year 11 and 12 to support eligible First Nations students with the educational costs of their studies.

Each year, QATSIF contacts all Queensland schools, including those in my electorate, inviting applications from eligible students that may wish to apply for financial help.

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation has already supported over **16,000 Students** to date with their senior studies through these very grants.

In 2023 alone, QATSIF will be supporting **4038** First Nations Queensland Students with their Year 11 and 12 Education, which is simply an outstanding effort.

This year, **1 in 9 students** that have been fortunate enough to take part in the QATSIF Program now hold leadership positions within their very own schools.

The New Recipient and Student Leaders' Celebration acknowledged the tremendous work of these scholarship recipients, as well as the students who have been elected to leadership roles.

I would like to acknowledge a few students whom I am very proud to say live and go to schools within my very own electorate of Forde.

Firstly, to Timothy Avery who represented **Beenleigh State High School**. Not only did Timothy walk away with a scholarship, he also emceed the ceremony in his very own humorous style.

And, Alexander Saclao and Madison Thomas from **Mabel Park State High School** were also candle lighters during the ceremony as well as being recipients in their own right.

Speaker, can I take this opportunity to acknowledge the tireless work of Professor Cindy Shannon (AM) who QATSIF owe a debt of gratitude.

She, along with many others are passionate about improving the educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People.

I'd like to end this statement with the words of Aunty Ruth Hegarty who said – "Dream Big, Achieve Big".

My sincere congratulations to all the recipients for 2023.

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