

EXTRACT FROM HANSARD

11 JUNE 2009

CASTLEREAGH SCHOOL — FOUNDATION DAY

Statement by Member for Riverton

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.54 pm]: Castlereagh School is a remarkable school located in my electorate of Riverton that caters to children with special needs, both mental and physical. Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the school's Foundation Day celebration that took the form of a bush festival complete with fresh baked rabbit, kangaroo stew and damper, and farm animals for the children to pat.

When I arrived at the schoolyard, it was filled with parents, teachers and children of all ages enjoying the event. Many of them took the opportunity to dress up in heritage outfits. The bush festival was not just a fun event for the school's 70 children aged between three and 18 years, but also an important part of their educational and social development.

I would particularly like to congratulate the dedicated staff at Castlereagh, ably led by Principal Robert Smailes, for the wonderful event and for their enthusiasm and devotion to the children.

Some of the staff at Castlereagh have quite surprising backgrounds. One of the teachers' aides, Dr Rajnee Bhusan, holds a doctorate in mathematics but chooses to work with children. Similarly, the school's physical education teacher for the past decade, Nick Vandeness, was a former high-flying corporate banker; he too made the career change.

It is not just the teachers who make Castlereagh unique, it is also the strong sense of community and the belonging that has come from the teachers, parents and students all working together that makes this school exceptional.