Speech

Address By

Her Excellency Mrs Marlena Jeffery

On the occasion of

Opening of the Brookfield Show

Brookfield, Queensland
19 May 2007

• President of the Show Society, Mr Don Chandler,
• Local Government member, Councillor Margaret de Witt,
• State Government member, Dr Bruce Flegg,
• Federal Government member, Michael Johnson,
• Distinguished guests
• Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls.

It's a great pleasure to be here today for such a wonderful occasion.

As you may well be aware, my husband Michael is in Samoa for the funeral of King Malietoa Tanumafili II, and deeply regrets that he cannot be here to open this important event.

We both have a great affinity with this part of the world. The first home we ever owned was on Brookfield Road and our son and his family now live down the road at Pullenvale.

For over 50 years the Brookfield Show has reflected the heart and soul of a former rural district, once distinguished by farms, fields, gullies and numerous running creeks and brooks.

The Brookfield Show is a tribute to country life. It gives its residents a sense of place, history and tradition.

The idea of a show was first conceived in 1897, when the local farmer's association held a meeting to discuss how best to publicise the district and all it produced.

By 1906 the show started tentatively as one-day event. By 1910, the official Brookfield Show was held over two days and included 33 classes of equestrian events and many classes for cattle, poultry, swine and dogs. There were also prizes in agricultural and dairy produce sections, vegetables, fruit and flowers sections, works of art, school work and a section titled "Women's Industries".

By 1926 the show lapsed, and while local agricultural and equestrian events continued, it wasn't until 1956 that a new Brookfield Show Society was inaugurated.

Fifty-one years on and we still enjoy this great event.

I think what delights me, is that while so much can change for the good in this world, so much of what is good can stay the same.

Today there might be a bit more razzle dazzle in sideshow alley, but the Brookfield Show is special because it maintains much of the wonderful traditions of the past.

It is an “Agricultural Show” – complete with competitions for cooking (and what a display of cakes and preserves I have seen); needlework; children’s art; adult art and craft; horticulture; poultry; and dog championships.

In keeping with the show’s reputation, horses continue to be a major feature and have drawn competitors from throughout South Queensland.

Recently my husband Michael had the pleasure of officially opening the World Polocrosse Championships in Warwick. He was particularly impressed by the way such equestrian events provide wonderful opportunities for whole families to become involved in a community-driven sport.

And it is good community spirit which ensures events like the Brookfield Show go from strength to strength. I understand 20,000 people attended last year’s show. What a fantastic achievement.

And what fantastic exposure to the many local groups, such as the CWA, Rotary, Scouts and Guides, who use this show as a major opportunity to raise funds and awareness of their activities.

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, I would like to finally pay tribute to the many hands that actually get this show on the road!

Once again, the word ‘volunteer’ features in my thanks. As the wife of the Governor-General, I have the great privilege of visiting many communities large and small, rural and urban, which depend on the generosity and dedication of local volunteers for their social cohesion.

Volunteers are the glue that binds a community and builds a nation of compassion, generosity, and prosperity.

And without the hardworking volunteer members of the Brookfield Show Society, there would simply be no show.

So thank you to all of those members and the many other available hands who have given of their time.

You have created a very special event. One that promotes a strong local community and preserves the very rich pioneering and farming heritage of the area.

And now it is my great pleasure to officially declare the 2007 Brookfield Show open.

Thankyou

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