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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Leichhardt Electorate: Local Arts

SPEECH

Wednesday, 4 June 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Entsch, Warren, MP

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Mr ENTSCHE (Leichhardt) (09:50): I rise today to very strongly support a local artist in my region, Amanda Feher. Those who know me in this place know that I have a passion for the arts and supporting local artists. Anyone who has visited my office would be well aware that the walls are lined with pieces showcasing my region—a very colourful display! In recent times I have spoken about the JUTE Theatre Company, a fantastic local theatre company in Cairns. I have advocated to our arts minister, Senator Brandis, on behalf of KickArts Contemporary Arts. Also a habit of mine is that when I bring a new piece to Canberra I make sure I get a photo of it with the current Prime Minister. It gives the artist a real buzz knowing they have artwork hanging in the national parliament.

That being the case, today I would like to take the opportunity to mention a highly talented visual artist and good friend of mine, Amanda Feher. Locally born and bred, Amanda lives on the Atherton Tablelands and works in a range of mediums across both two- and three-dimensional art. Amanda's primary goal is to touch people with her work, and I can say that she is absolutely outstanding. From beautiful sculptures in copper and marble to landscapes, portraits and abstracts in charcoal, pastels, oils and acrylic, she has a touch that really brings lightness to any piece. I was quite humbled by a portrait she did of me back in the early 2000s, which won the local Cairns Art Society prize and was acquired by—would you believe it?—the *Cairns Post*. It hung for a time in their boardroom. I am not sure it is there now.

A real strength of Amanda's is public art—the large installations that she has done for council collections across Queensland. A giant copper and steel ant sculpture which she created for the Mighty Meat Ants football team at Augathella looks almost ready to come to life. Can you imagine it? It is 7.5 metres tall atop a wooden pole. At Dimbulah, she crafted an incredibly realistic two-metre high tobacco plant in copper as a legacy of the region's tobacco industry.

Now that Cairns is undergoing a period of revitalisation in the CBD, in time for the G20 finance meeting in September, I urge Cairns Regional Council to include significant pieces of street art and public art in their works. Certainly they need to take a close look at one of Amanda's creations. They could have a look at what councils in Townsville have done, for example, with some of Amanda's outstanding works. She did one for Jezzine Barracks, which opened recently. If you have a look at what the local council has done with the Esplanade in Cooktown, they have brought the history—Indigenous through to Chinese migration and mining—of the town alive with a whole series of magnificent street art. It really adds another dimension to public spaces. I would urge anyone who is interested to look at Amanda's work at www.amandafeher.com.au.