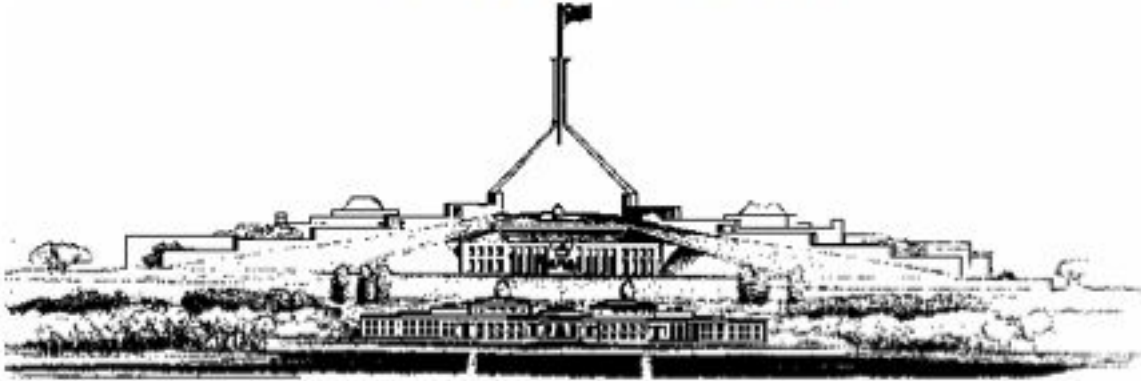




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Fairfax Electorate: Youth in Philanthropy

SPEECH

Monday, 12 February 2018

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker	O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.	

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (10:51): Last Friday, I was privileged to attend a Youth in Philanthropy conference at the University of the Sunshine Coast. I commend the young leaders who participated in the event. Thirty-four students in total, ranging from 10 to 17 years of age from seven different schools across the Buderim catchment—young leaders, each and every one of them—will this morning go back to their respective schools to undertake a philanthropic project of their choice.

At times, I bemoan the fact that the pendulum in our society has swung too far in favour of individual rights without a commensurate degree of individual responsibility, and the fact that, as a society, we don't speak as readily as we once did about the importance of one's character and how it finds expression in one's contribution to their local community. This is what makes events like last Friday so inspiring. What gives me great hope for our future is witnessing young Australians who are leaders among their peers recognise that, as leaders, the weight of their responsibility is heavier than the weight of their rights. When a generation of such leaders demonstrate a commitment to that principle by serving others, philanthropically or otherwise, in not just words but most importantly in actions, then we will see that pendulum of society swing back into balance, into the sensible centre, such is the importance of leadership.

The imbalance of rights and responsibility that pervades our society today has become a cultural issue. There's only one thing that can ever change culture and that is leadership. I believe the leaders of tomorrow, our younger generation, have what it takes in this regard but they still need encouragement and mentorship and they need the opportunity to lead. That's what groups like the Buderim Foundation's youth committee provide by organising events such as last Friday's. It's what the University of the Sunshine Coast and community groups like SunnyKids actively support by assisting with such events. It's what schools on the Sunshine Coast teach, not only at their own campuses but through participating, in the case of Matthew Flinders and Sunshine Coast Grammar School, and through helping to facilitate events such as last Friday's.

Youth in Philanthropy is leadership in action. I, for one, am enormously confident that our future is in good hands.