



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Fairfax Electorate: Youth**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 20 March 2024**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Wednesday, 20 March 2024	<b>Source</b> House
<b>Page</b> 123	<b>Proof</b> Yes
<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted MP	<b>Question No.</b>

---

**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (09:58): Much is said in this parliament about national leadership. As I witnessed last week, when I held a morning tea forum with student leaders across the Sunshine Coast, leadership is found right across our country, in different parts of our community and at different ages. The student leaders with whom I met will be running this country come mid-century—around that point of 2050, they'll be the ones running this country.

We went through an exercise in scenario planning. As a result of that exercise, these student leaders made crystal clear that their vision for Australia is not a big Australia with a massively exploding population but rather an Australia that continues to grow incrementally over time. They also made it very clear that, as Australia does grow, they do not want to see urban sprawl right across the country, but rather more care taken around creating density, especially with the very smart use of technology and infrastructure. They want to see a diverse mix of infrastructure used so that we are not just reliant on the car and on the road. They also made it clear that they want to see an Australia that might be more united but still maintains very distinct cultures, in acknowledgement that people come from different places, in acknowledgement of not just our First Nations people but the fact that we are, indeed, the most successful multicultural country in the world and in recognition that we will share a common set of values that does not impinge on our ability to also express some differences in cultural heritage.

These students were from Sunshine Coast Grammar School, Coolum State High School, Nambour State College, Matthew Flinders Anglican College, Burnside State High School, Nambour Christian College and Suncoast Christian College. Paralympian Jenna Jones, a true inspiration, joined us on the day. It was a reminder to all of us who are given the opportunity to lead, in whatever walk of life, that, if we are prepared to be persistent and to hang on and fight for our dreams of what we want the future to be, then they can come true, as they have for Jenna. I thank those students for their leadership. They're going to be running this country not long from now.