



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Football

SPEECH

Monday, 22 February 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Van Manen, Bert, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (11:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) notes that:
- (a) football (soccer) is:
 - (i) played by more than 1.18 million people in Australia in some capacity; and
 - (ii) the most popular sport amongst children of both genders in Australia with more girls now playing soccer than netball;
 - (b) the Hyundai A-League now has 104,913 members, creating a tremendous community spirit amongst supporters and players;
 - (c) local football clubs are the backbone of the football community, with 2,155 clubs in Australia at the moment; and
 - (d) there are positive effects on mental health of adults who play sport, including football; and
- (2) congratulates the Football Federation Australia on its positive community programs, including Sporting Schools, Football Fever, the AIA Vitality Miniroos, Female Football Week, and Play Project, as well as the Asian Football Confederation Asian Cup multicultural programs which encourage participation, community spirit, integration, as well as healthy, active living.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this motion into the House to recognise the value of soccer, or football as it is more commonly known around the world, to the community in Australia. Some 1.8 million people in Australia play football in some capacity. It is the most popular sport amongst children of both genders in Australia, with more girls now playing soccer than netball. The Hyundai A-League has gone from success to success, with nearly 105,000 members across our member clubs, creating tremendous community spirit amongst supporters and players. Importantly, it is our local football clubs that are the backbone of the football community, with some 2,155 clubs across Australia at present. But, more importantly, there are the positive effects on the mental health of those who play sport, and, in particular in relation to this motion, it is football that we should recognise. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Football Federation of Australia on their positive community programs, including Sporting Schools, Football Fever, the AIA Vitality Miniroos, Female Football Week and Play Project, as well as the Asian Cup multicultural programs, which encourage participation, community spirit and integration, as well as healthy and active living.

As we stand here today and recognise the value of football in our community, it is also important to recognise that around the world it is known as the world game. It might not quite have that flavour here in Australia, but the football community is working very actively. You may support the well-known household names of Manchester United or Liverpool, or in my case Tottenham Hotspur, Bayern Munich for those of German origin, the great Italian clubs of Roma and AS Roma or the great Spanish clubs of Barcelona. It is a game that attracts all sorts and all cultures. Whether we look at local futsal competitions, social competitions in our local communities or school programs, tournaments and events, we can see that football has become the most popular sport among children of both genders in Australia, with, as I said earlier, more girls now playing football than netball.

There is no doubt that it is a sport that plays an increasingly important role in Australian society. You only have to walk through your local shopping centre or through your local community to see the kids in jerseys of clubs far and wide across the world, but, also, there are those supporting our great local A-League clubs. Unfortunately, my great local A-League club played in a nine-goal thriller on the weekend, but still lost at the end of the day to those from Perth. But it is a great example of where football is going in this country, and of the support that people

are giving to their local A-League clubs. That is the pinnacle here. Equally, it is great that those A-League clubs are getting involved in our local communities, by holding coaching clinics not only to encourage our juniors but also to train them up in the skills that they need to create an opportunity if they want to progress overseas.

As I said in my opening comments, there are some 2,155 local football clubs across the Australian community—great clubs such as Logan Lightning FC, Ormeau FC, Park Ridge Panthers FC and Bethania Rams FC; clubs that have been around for many years and provide a tremendous community link for those who are interested in playing football. In a lot of cases, those local sporting clubs have become the backbone of those local communities. Equally, Football Federation Australia has done some great work over the past few years and delivered more than 10,000 community coaching courses to ensure that our kids have the skills and abilities to compete in a global game. It is a game that continues to grow and prosper, and I wish it every success in the future.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?