



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

STATEMENTS ON INDULGENCE

London Olympic Games

SPEECH

Wednesday, 19 September 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Speaker	Jones, Stephen, MP	Question No.	

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (11:20): The Illawarra region is a nursery for great sporting champions, including Olympic champions. I would like to take the opportunity today to extend my congratulations to one local champion: local kayaking champion and gold medallist Dave Smith, a member of the Australian men's K4 team that claimed gold in the 1,000-metre final by more than half a boat length. Dave is a resident of Warilla, which is a suburb of my electorate of Throsby in New South Wales, and is now fondly referred to by locals as the Warilla Wonder after the fantastic effort he displayed at the London games. It was a victory that was all the more sweet, I am sure, after narrowly missing out on a medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. As Dave says, 'A few years and memories have been erased.'

There was little doubt in the minds of the Illawarra locals that Dave and the team would achieve gold in London. He is a natural athlete. He started competing at little nippers at Warilla surf club at the age of six and was achieving success in surf-lifesaving, iron man and kayaking competitions at a national level by the age of 14. In 2001 he was named Shellharbour Junior Sports Star of the Year and went on to represent New South Wales in the Australian titles, placing first in the under-19s double ski in 2003.

By this stage it was clear that Dave was destined for bigger and better things and he got this chance in 2004 when he was selected to represent Australia at the junior world cup regatta, finishing just outside the medals in both the K1 and K4 1,000-metre events. He bounced back in 2006 at the Australian championships, winning the K2 1,000 metres and winning again in 2007 and 2008 in the K4 events. In fact, Dave is part of the current national championship team after winning his fourth overall title and third K4 in the event earlier this year. He has already achieved more than most of us back home could ever dream and we could not be more proud of him. I am sure I am not alone in my anticipation of the 2016 games, where we will have the great opportunity to cheer our local hero, the Warilla Wonder, to another golden victory.

Dave's contributions to the Olympics are well celebrated, but there are many other people from the Illawarra that I would like to make mention of. They are the people who form the teams and also the people who give up their own time to go to referee in some of these Olympic events, and I pay tribute at this moment to their contributions as well.