



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Neighbourhood Watch**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 2 December 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, 2 December 2015	<b>Source</b>	House
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<b>Questioner</b>		<b>Responder</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	Zappia, Tony, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

**Mr ZAPPIA** (Makin) (10:12): In March of this year, Neighbourhood Watch Australasia opened up a round of community grants made available through the federal government Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The guidelines were spelt out in a public notice and the closing date for applications was 2 April. Neighbourhood Watch Australasia managed the program and allocated the funds available. Of the \$80,723 allocated to the 36 successful groups, no funding was made available to South Australian applicants. South Australian Neighbourhood Watch applicants were advised that they were ineligible for funding because Neighbourhood Watch SA was not a member of the national body.

In an email dated 21 April sent to SA Neighbourhood Watch group No. 188, the CEO of Neighbourhood Watch Australasia stated:

We regret to advise that unfortunately the Neighbourhood Watch South Australia Volunteer Association is currently not a member of Neighbourhood Watch Australasia. For valuable Neighbourhood Watch groups to receive funds, their representative body must be a member jurisdiction of Neighbourhood Watch Australasia.

The CEO's advice appears to be inconsistent with the funding guidelines. On 3 July, I wrote to the Attorney-General about the matter. On 17 August, I received a reply from the Minister for Justice, which stated:

The NHWA Community Funding Program's 2015 guidelines ... do not include a requirement that the applicant be a member of the Neighbourhood Watch national body. Accordingly, South Australian Neighbourhood Watch groups are not precluded, on this basis, from access to the Program's funding.

The minister's response is consistent with the guidelines and contradicts Neighbourhood Watch Australasia's application of the guidelines. I have written to the minister asking whether Neighbourhood Watch Australasia has breached their guidelines with the federal government by rejecting the South Australian applications. I am awaiting a response from the minister to that question.

I believe that the South Australian Neighbourhood Watch groups were wrongly excluded from the funding round by Neighbourhood Watch Australasia. I acknowledge that the government has no direct role in the distribution of the funds, but I believe that as the provider of the funds the federal government must ensure that the distribution process used is fair and accessible to all worthy community groups, as the guidelines quite clearly state. In this particular case, South Australia has clearly missed out, in what I consider to be an unfair application of those guidelines, and I bring this matter to the attention of the minister.

The **DEPUTY SPEAKER** ( Ms Henderson ): If no member presently objects, three-minute constituency statements may continue for a period of 60 minutes.