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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Netball

SPEECH

Monday, 17 March 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Tehan, Dan, MP

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Mr TEHAN (Wannon) (12:44): It is wonderful to see you in the chair, Madam Deputy Speaker Griggs. I do not think I have seen you in the chair before, so it is delightful to be here this afternoon. It is an absolute delight to speak on this motion, regarding netball, before us today. I commend the member for McPherson on her wonderful motion. I was just talking to her and she was telling me that she was a very good netball player herself and would have had a very promising career at the state level except for a vertebra injury. So it goes to show you that injury can cripple us all. Anyway, I commend the member for McPherson and I will look forward to hearing more about her promising netball career.

The member for Herbert was also telling me that he is fairly mean on the netball court himself. It was also very enlightening to hear from him about his prowess on the netball court.

Mr Ewen Jones: My daughter played for Townsville.

Mr TEHAN: Right, okay. I think most of us have enjoyed, in some form or another, a friendly game of netball. As a matter of fact, I know that in a lot of country areas mixed netball is very popular and it is a great way for country communities to socialise and to have a bit of fun after work.

But there is a serious side to netball as well. There are over 20 million people worldwide who play netball, so that is a lot of people out there participating, keeping fit and enjoying a great sport. In Australia we have 1.2 million participants, and the majority of those are girls or young women who are out there having a great time. One of my fondest boyhood memories as a young kid growing up in the country was always turning up to Saturday morning sport. You would be there. All the boys would be looking forward to running out onto the football ground, and all the girls would be looking forward to running out on the netball court. Then there would be great socialisation afterwards, and that still continues today in urban, regional and rural centres. It is absolutely an essential part of those communities that we have netball and the various forms of football which take place across the country.

I am also very pleased to see that the Australian government, the Abbott government, has recognised the importance of netball through a contribution of \$3 million to Netball Australia. That has been given through the Australian Sports Commission, and it is important that we give funding to the grassroots support which provides the physical basis for young women, in particular, to be out there exercising on a regular basis, because, as we know, when we are out there living healthy lives our minds remain healthy, and that helps our communities across the nation.

So I commend the member for McPherson for this motion. I think that in this place it is always good for us to stop and recognise the important things that take place in our community. We can get tied up in the hefty things, the things that we consider important, but for many young people that daily game of netball—the nerves beforehand, wondering whether they are going to come away with victory, how they have played and whether they have let their team mates down or not—becomes a fundamental part of their lives growing up and a fundamental part of their activities on a weekend. I know that there are netball games played right across my electorate of Wannon, and they are played fiercely and competitively but ultimately in a great spirit, because everyone is able to shake hands at the end of the match.

So I think it is important for all of us here to come together to recognise the importance of netball and what it contributes to our way of life. I think those opposite would probably remember watching that game in the eighties when Australia played New Zealand for the Trans Tasman Trophy and Bob Hawke was in the audience. We won by a goal. It was 1-1, and we won the thriller. I think the whole nation celebrated when that event occurred. So it is great to see netball still flourishing and it is great to see us here as a parliament recognising that.