



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

KU Starting Points

SPEECH

Wednesday, 19 September 2007

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker	Hayes, Chris, MP	Question No.	

Mr HAYES (Werriwa) (9.42 am)—Since becoming the member for Werriwa I have had the distinct pleasure of working with a range of different groups that do nothing other than help serve our community. On Saturday night I attended KU Children's Services charity night for KU Starting Points—Macarthur. Starting Points is an organisation that services communities from Liverpool through to the Southern Highlands. It provides child care and respite care for families with children with disabilities that range from mild to severe. When I see the work that is undertaken by this organisation I think our communities are very fortunate to have the committed professionals, such as Dr Freeland and other paediatricians in our area, and the various volunteers who act in these programs.

KU Starting Points was formed by KU Kindergartens and Macquarie University some 13 years ago. At the moment the organisation is involved with 50 to 60 kids whose disabilities range from mild to severe and include down syndrome, autism and Asperger's syndrome. Their families have received the benefits of this organisation. Those benefits are not just child care. This organisation goes about setting up various support groups for families, including fathers groups and mothers groups. In other words, it is out there catering for the interests of the families, including the siblings of the kids with disabilities. I would not necessarily say this is a unique organisation but it is certainly staffed by very good and conscientious people, such as Lorraine Brown, who is the CEO. By the way, Noelene Brown is the patron. The organisation serves the community in south-west Sydney, which, unfortunately, has an overrepresentation of people with disabilities.

As a member of parliament, I feel that it is incumbent on me and my colleagues to do as much as we can to support people who dedicate so much time and effort to looking after their communities. We are indebted to them for their efforts and to the professionals—paediatricians, psychologists, counsellors and speech therapists—for their assistance. All these people give a significant amount of their time, and their motivation is to serve the community. I have great respect for this organisation. (*Time expired*)