



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Main Committee

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Meals on Wheels

SPEECH

Wednesday, 12 August 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker Georganas, Steve, MP	Question No.

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (9.38 am)—I rise today to speak about an organisation that I am sure all parliamentarians on all sides of politics support: Meals on Wheels. It was about this time last year that a relationship was formed between Meals on Wheels and the Australian parliament with the formation of the Meals on Wheels Parliamentary Friends Group. It was formed because members of parliament on all sides of politics in this place wanted to acknowledge the tireless contributions by those involved in Meals on Wheels, be they volunteers or the staff who support people to stay in their own homes. Like many others here, I attend many Meals on Wheels meetings throughout my electorate and on a few occasions I have had the honour of actually going out and delivering some meals in my area. I am always very humbled to see the incredible, valuable contribution made to our society by those who support others. The commitment of the staff and volunteers of Meals on Wheels to assist the elderly and isolated in the community should be recognised by the federal parliament.

Next week, on 18 August, Mark Coulton, the member for Parkes, and I are hosting a Meals on Wheels Parliamentary Friends function here in Parliament House to once again recognise the contribution made by Meals on Wheels volunteers and their staff. Many MPs and senators are attending, because they recognise the contribution of Meals on Wheels in their own communities. We will also be hosting Meals on Wheels president, Mr Leon Holmes; vice-president, Mr Ron Walsh; secretary, Mr Cam Pearce; and the ACT operators of the Meals on Wheels services, which are run by the Red Cross in the ACT. There will be an overview of Meals on Wheels activities and a presentation on current and proposed research on nutrition. Following morning tea or morning coffee, Mark Coulton and I, who are the co-chairs of the group, will be visiting one of the clients of the ACT Meals on Wheels service. The meeting next week will be very informative and will allow people to reflect on the needs of the volunteers, staff and local community. All that are here, of course, and every member of the House are most welcome to attend, and I encourage them to come along. Indeed, the staple diet of Meals on Wheels will be available—scones and cream and fruit platters—to ensure that we are all well nourished.

Increasingly, people as they age wish to remain independently in their own homes and the staff and volunteers of Meals on Wheels provide a service which allows many thousands of Australians to achieve their wishes. The elderly, ill, disabled and those who are unable to cook for themselves all benefit from the goodwill of the volunteers of Meals on Wheels. We all know that volunteers are the lifeblood of the community. Volunteers keep over 100 branches in my state of South Australia running, every day delivering 5,000 meals across the state. I understand that volunteers are always required, and I urge those who are able to think about supporting Meals on Wheels and those in the community to become volunteers. (*Time expired*)