



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Hindmarsh Electorate: Pooch Park

SPEECH

Thursday, 18 March 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Georganas, Steve, MP

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Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (9.45 am)—I am very pleased to have the opportunity today to speak about an issue of importance and concern in my local community regarding the safety of pedestrians and the safety of families and their pet dogs around Pooch Park. Pooch Park is a joint project by the City of West Torrens and the City of Charles Sturt councils in my electorate. It is a great concept where owners can take their pet dogs along to this park and let them off the leash so that the dogs can get exercise and feel free to run around. It represents an absolutely outstanding achievement for the local community, who have embraced this particular space with gusto. The park has off-leash running space for dogs and is fully equipped with a double gate entrance, agility equipment, benches, tables, gazebos for shade, water fountains for both people and dogs, and doggie bag dispensers and waste bins. The park has become increasingly popular with dog owners not only from my electorate but from all over the city, who use the facility to allow their dogs time to socialise, play and exercise. If you go down there on a Saturday or Sunday morning, it is absolutely jam-packed with cars et cetera. I am a dog owner myself, and my wife Wendy and I regularly take our Maltese-cross terriers, Coco and Bella, down to Pooch Park.

I was alarmed to hear recently about an accident on the road adjacent to Pooch Park in which a dog was run over and killed while crossing the road with all the mayhem of parking and congested traffic there on the weekends. Fortunately, neither the driver of the car nor any other person was injured. One of my constituents, Wayne Brown, of Fulham Gardens, regularly attends the park with his two dogs. On this particular day he witnessed this accident and as a result felt compelled to contact me to see if anything could be done to reduce the risk of future incidents. Because of the popularity of the park, there has been a significant increase in the amount of foot traffic and car traffic in the area, with no extra precautions to warn motorists that there are walkers, dogs and children to look out for. This tragic accident highlights the need for better signage and awareness of the increased pedestrian traffic to the area so that motorists are adequately warned that circumstances have changed and they need to be more careful when driving through the area.

At the time, I wrote to the South Australian transport minister, Patrick Conlon, and the mayors of both the cities of West Torrens and Charles Sturt, requesting action be taken to reduce the risk of further accidents. I am pleased to say that the South Australian Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure recently confirmed as a result of our requests the upgrade of signage in the area to the latest standard by the end of March 2010. This achievement may seem trivial in the context of billions of dollars announced, but it is the local issues that matter to my constituents, and I stand here today to represent them. I congratulate my constituent Wayne Brown for speaking out to protect his community and the City of Charles Sturt Council, the City of West Torrens Council, the South Australian state government and Minister Patrick Conlon for responding in a timely and effective manner. (*Time expired*)