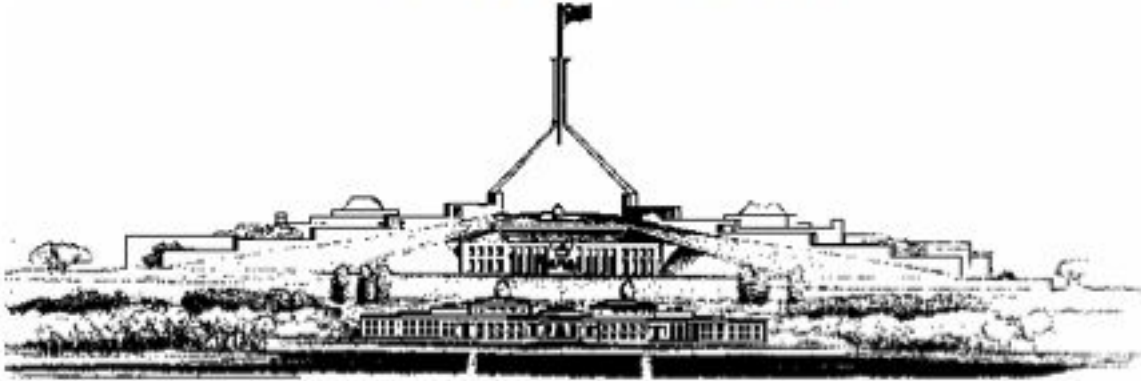




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Main Committee**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Stirling Electorate: Neighbourhood Watch**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 27 October 2010**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, 27 October 2010	<b>Source</b>	House
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<b>Questioner</b>		<b>Responder</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	Keenan, Michael, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

**Mr KEENAN** (Stirling) (9.41 am)—I would like to talk about an organisation that is very important to me and one that has in the past had a great presence in the Stirling community, a presence that I hope to help re-establish in the near future. Neighbourhood Watch was once a strong community network right across my electorate, with countless members, suburb managers and street representatives all working to make their local neighbourhoods safer places to live. Unfortunately, a lack of support from all levels of government has over time eroded the foundation of support for this group in Stirling, with only one suburb manager left at the start of this year. That member was Les Gray, one of the most selfless, hardworking and dedicated community members in my constituency of Stirling.

I would like to take this opportunity to make a special note of Les and his involvement with Neighbourhood Watch. Les has persevered with the organisation and worked tirelessly with the local police with what little resources are available to him to try to keep the brand and the network alive. Without Les's involvement, I would not be here today with such a strong optimism about the future of the local branch of the organisation. Les brought to my attention the dire situation Neighbourhood Watch was in and how his tireless efforts to rebuild the once strong network were going largely unnoticed by his government representatives. His perseverance brought him to my office and together we hope to restore the strength of the network in the Stirling community.

With Les's help, I have been pursuing a new membership drive across my electorate, and I can report in this place today that our efforts have been largely successful. Neighbourhood Watch has grown by 60 members in the last few months alone and more membership forms continue to come in every week. We now have 14 suburb managers in suburbs including Carine, Balcatta, Westminster and Nollamara. We also have another eight street representatives, all actively recruiting new members to Neighbourhood Watch. The effect, according to the new members in particular, is already noticeable. Graffiti hotspots have now been marked with the unmistakable Neighbourhood Watch logo on a sticker or a sign, and once that has been done the vandals have not been returning to those sites. Confidence has been restored in some of our local streets where crime has in the past been a serious problem. Most importantly, young people are getting involved and taking up a role in the safety of our communities.

One of the most noticeable factors amongst the new members is the average age. Half of the new members are relatively young, in their 30s—a new generation of people willing to get involved in efforts to make our community safer. This gives me a lot of confidence in the future of Neighbourhood Watch locally and the potential to build the network and spread the logo right across the state. The Neighbourhood Watch logo, one of the most recognisable logos in Australia, is also one of the best deterrents for local crime. My goal is to have the suburbs of Stirling saturated with this logo and members behind each one ready to deter the criminals who for too long have had free rein on our streets. Neighbourhood Watch is, by its own definition, a community based program aimed at reducing the incidence of preventable crime and preserving our way of life. This is my goal and I call on every member of the Stirling community to get involved. (*Time expired*)