



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

National Stronger Regions Fund and Victoria

SPEECH

Monday, 27 February 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Ryan, Joanne, MP

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Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (11:21): I rise with very mixed feelings about this motion. I note some of the things that the member for Corangamite referenced during her speech. One was that she thought this was an important decision—the new iteration of the RDAF, if you like. In growth corridors it is a very important decision, because in my electorate we have been cut out of access to this new program. I rise today to speak to that—to speak to the value of what the first iteration, the RDAF program, under a Labor government, delivered across Victoria. In the electorate of Lalor it delivered a significant contribution to the development of Eagle Stadium the newest basketball/netball stadium in Victoria, one that is now being celebrated across the state. It is a state-of-the-art facility that would not have come to fruition without the first iterations of RDAF funding under a Labor government.

I would also acknowledge that in the last few years, in the second round, Wyndham City Council, with support from myself and state government, were successful in attracting \$3.25 million from the Stronger Regions Fund for the redevelopment of Chirnside Park, the home of the Werribee Football Club. That redevelopment will mean that that football ground will be fit for purpose for a premier club in the VFL. I know how hard I worked in the community to support Wyndham City Council to get support from the state government to work with those opposite, particularly the Victorian National members, to ensure that that funding came to Wyndham.

It is on the back of that that I rise today to say that it is a crying shame that this government sees fit to separate out from its notions of regions one of the fastest-growing growth corridors in the country—not just in Victoria. In the City of Wyndham 80 babies are born a week. There were 6½ thousand housing lots approved in Wyndham between January and July 2016. Let's put that in perspective. As the member for Lalor, I stood here when we tipped over to a city of 200,000; we are now a city of 230,000. That is the growth rate in the community that I represent. Over the past two decades, Melbourne's west had the fastest absolute rate of growth of any Melbourne region, and this is expected to continue over the next 20 years, from around 837,000 people across Melbourne's west to 1.2 million by 2031. My electorate has been absolutely cut out of accessing any of these funds to support them.

I will give you a snapshot of life in Wyndham as this growth occurs. As families move in, attracted by the affordable housing that is offered in our region, as those families move in, as 6½ thousand homes are built in a six-month period and filled with people from across Victoria, we work every day on building communities from the ground up—from developing plans for the next school to building that school, to establishing cultures in those schools. Wyndham City Council works tirelessly on infrastructure programs, on putting aside reserves and building football and soccer grounds and netball and basketball courts. That provision is extraordinary, and of course it all costs money. This government's decision to narrow who this fund will be open to means that this community is locked out of accessing those funds. It is a crying shame.

I note too the notion of regions, and the notion that regional people are only served by funds in regions. The member for Griffith was beside me before and we were having a bit of a chat about this. In the past iteration the member for Griffith was successful in getting a Ronald McDonald House built in her electorate. That is for regional families. Eagle Stadium is a regional facility and people from the regions will be accessing that. I think it is fairly clear that it is another example of this government's refusal to give Victoria what it deserves. It is ignoring Victorians. It is ignoring the people in my electorate.