



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Trade Training Centres

SPEECH

Thursday, 10 May 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Leigh, Andrew, MP

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Dr LEIGH (Fraser) (09:51): The Australian government is establishing trade training centres to help increase the proportion of students achieving year 12 or an equivalent qualification. Since parliament last sat it has been my pleasure to open two sites of an ACT trades training centre. The lead site of the trade training centre is St Mary MacKillop College, and that was opened by the Prime Minister and Minister Garrett on 17 February 2012. But it was my pleasure on 26 March to open the site at St Francis Xavier College and on 2 May to open the site at Merici College.

The site at St Francis Xavier College includes a large workshop, a machine room, a covered outdoor workshop and flexible learning areas, and works in with the Canberra Institute of Technology. I acknowledge College Captains Chloe Kelly and Nick Mahony; the Director of Catholic Education, Moira Najdecki; Archbishop Mark Coleridge; CIT's Adrian Marron; and Principal Angus Tulley.

The Merici College site includes a restaurant and a commercial kitchen. I acknowledge Principal Catherine Rey; College Captain Anne Cusack; and Spirituality Captain Danielle Farrell; the school board chair, Graeme Plenderleith; guest speaker, Callum Hann, from the Jamie Oliver cooking skills program; and Monsignor John Woods.

St Francis Xavier and St Angela Merici were both alive 500 years ago—St Angela Merici, a teacher in Brescia, Italy; and St Francis Xavier, a missionary from Spain who travelled to India, Japan, Borneo and the Moluccas. They never met one another but I think in the stories of both of them we can learn something about the trade training centres today. Like St Francis Xavier, Australian school graduates will travel the world. They will go through different careers and work in different industries, and they need to be ready for the unexpected that accompanies them. But, as St Angela Merici so passionately did during her life, they need to be provided with the best quality of education. They need that sustenance that education provides to the soul and to the mind to allow them the flexibility to adapt to a changing environment.

I commend both schools on the work that they have done, in conjunction with the fourth site, St Clare's College in the electorate of Canberra. The work that these schools and the school communities are doing as part of these trade training centres is essential in equipping young Canberrans for a future of change and a future in which they require all the skills that we can equip them with.