



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Budget

SPEECH

Wednesday, 27 August 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Wednesday, 27 August 2014	Source House
Page 8748	Proof No
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Brodtmann, Gai, MP	Question No.

Ms BRODTMANN (Canberra) (13:51): On Tuesday we heard the dreadful news that the Australian War Memorial has been forced to close its program of travelling exhibitions—shameful news—after the government withdrew \$800,000 in annual funding effective immediately. Memorial Director Dr Brendan Nelson confirmed that the 17-year-old program of sending exhibits to regional museums and galleries is no more. I want to echo the comments of my colleague the member for Batman, in condemning this decision, and I want to call on the government to immediately reinstate funding for this important program.

As all members will be aware, we have just entered the centenary of Anzac. This centenary is a unique opportunity for our country to commemorate the First World War, to remember the very great sacrifices made by so many, and to reflect on the importance and the significance that this conflict had for our young nation. This heartless cut will mean hundreds of thousands of Australians will, throughout the centenary, no longer have access to important history about Australia's involvement in the First World War.

I am lucky: my constituents have direct access to the wonderful War Memorial here in Canberra. Unfortunately, millions of Australians in regional Australia do not have that access and rely on these travelling exhibitions. Since its inception, the travelling exhibitions program has seen 40 exhibits travel to venues in every state and territory of Australia and many international venues. The program has touched over 3.8 million lives. This decision is an absolute outrage, particularly as we embark on the Anzac centenary. I call for its immediate reversal. (*Time expired*)