



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Lalor Electorate

SPEECH

Monday, 20 March 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Page 2418
Questioner
Speaker Ryan, Joanne, MP

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Ms RYAN (Lalor—Opposition Whip) (10:30): It is my pleasure today to talk about what it means to live in a democracy. I have always believed that an informed, engaged and articulate community will be heard by government, will have the power to interact with government, will be able to influence the decision makers. This weekend in Wyndham we had the Weerama community festival, and it was a great celebration this year. It was a community coming together with community floats and with community members volunteering as marshals and traffic controllers. It was a great, great day. I had the honour of being the MC for the parade, which gave me an opportunity to say hello to all those people who fought so valiantly across the last month to have their informed voices heard by our state government. To the state government's credit, they acted like a good government and responded. They listened to the community and the youth detention centre in my community will now be placed on a site that my community accepts—away from the centre of town, away from our front yard. It is now going to be placed in a much more sensible position because my community got engaged and informed around the issues, joined together and ran a strategic campaign. It has always been my belief because it has been my experience that that is what communities need to do to ensure that they are at the tables when the decisions are made.

Last week, I also had the pleasure of running the first Lalor SRC forum for 2017. This is a tradition I began on becoming the member for Lalor and it was my pleasure to again work with 20 schools across a day—with the young people in my electorate from the ages of those in grade 4 through to year 12—about just those principles on how to enact change in your community and in your school community. What skills do you need? As a leader, how do you know what your community thinks about something? How do you ask? How do you get that feedback and what do you do with that feedback? How do you plan for change, measure the impact that you have had in a community and go back to the issues and work again?

It is a great way to spend a day working with young people and passing on that kind of knowledge, working intensively with them on how they might influence decision makers on the ground in their schools to create better school communities. It is an absolute honour to be the member for Lalor, to represent people who know full well the power of engagement—the power of being engaged politically and at the community level. We work hard in my community in a growth corridor to build community every day from the ground up. I am incredibly proud to be the member for Lalor.