



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Ryan Electorate: Hear and Say Centre

SPEECH

Thursday, 16 August 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Prentice, Jane, MP

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Mrs PRENTICE (Ryan) (09:30): I rise today to acknowledge the work of an outstanding organisation in my electorate, which is helping children across Queensland: the Hear and Say Centre. The Hear and Say Centre, based in Auchenflower, was established by Dimity Dornan in 1992. Dr Dornan wanted to develop an auditory-verbal therapy program for children who were deaf or had hearing loss. She started with just six children in a small office in Brisbane. Today more than 500 children and families are involved in the program across five centres in Brisbane, Cairns, Toowoomba, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. The centre also has an outreach program to support regional and remote families. The Hear and Say Centre provides a unique family based program, which recognises the parent as the natural language teacher for their child. Their aim is for all children to achieve age appropriate speech and language, like their hearing peers, by six years of age. This gives them the opportunity to attend local schools, have wider employment choices and improved social integration with the hearing world.

Hear and Say also provides worldwide professional education for hearing healthcare workers and is leading advancements in collaborative research and development in neuroscience, biotechnology, education and e-health.

The staff at Hear and Say include certified auditory-verbal therapists, speech pathologists, teachers of the deaf, audiologists and early childhood teachers, who are supported by administration, fundraising and communications staff, and a range of volunteers. The funding base for the centre includes state and Commonwealth government grants, and the Medicare levy, but the majority of funding comes from donations including fundraising and support from community service groups and corporate organisations.

The Hear and Say centre recently marked its 20th anniversary. I congratulate founder Dr Dimity Dornan and her staff on this significant milestone. After helping thousands of youngsters, the centre is celebrating with plans to expand from its Auchenflower base to a new \$10 million centre in Ashgrove. Hear and Say has purchased adjacent buildings at Nathan Avenue, part of the former Ithaca campus of the Brisbane Institute of TAFE.

The area planned for Hear and Say is more than double the space they currently occupy and would accommodate Hear and Say for at least the next 20 years. The new state-of-the-art facilities will allow Hear and Say to provide services and programs to give deaf children the world of speech and sound for the next 20 years and beyond. The centre will also provide headquarters for Queensland's largest paediatric implantable hearing technologies program and create a bioscience precinct for clinical excellence in neuroscience, biotechnology, education and e-health. To make their vision a reality, Hear and Say have created Project Possibility, a campaign which will enable them to raise the necessary funds to refurbish their new buildings. In June 2010, the Queensland government announced \$2 million worth of capital funding for the Hear and Say Centre. This seed funding was used to purchase the buildings and the centre are now appealing to the community to give generously to help build their new home. Every dollar makes a difference. I would encourage everyone to support Hear and Say's extremely important work, which is of benefit to our entire community.