



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Stirling Electorate: Balga Senior High School**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 27 March 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Thursday, 27 March 2014  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Keenan, Michael, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr KEENAN** (Stirling—Minister for Justice) (09:45): I would like to draw the attention of the House to a group of impressive young people in my electorate at Balga Senior High School who have successfully integrated into mainstream classes from the school's Intensive English Centre and who were in Canberra last week for the F1 in Schools Technology Challenge. I had the pleasure of meeting the students: Amirali Azimi, Bakr Al-Qaraghuli, Asung Tamom, Dat Phan and Hae Ser Hae Ser, originally from Iran, Iraq, Burma, Vietnam and Thailand. They were accompanied by three dedicated staff from Balga Senior High School: Rosemary Evans, Trisha Dean and Michael Spanier.

Balga Senior High School is a culturally diverse, inclusive school with students from more than 40 nations. The school is a strong representation of the diverse cultures within my electorate. Balga Senior High School's motto is 'Strength in Unity', and some of the programs aimed at bringing together students from various backgrounds include the highly successful programs run by its Intensive English Centre. The centre provides students with the skills required to transition into classrooms teaching the Australian Curriculum. The F1 challenge is the world's largest secondary school technology program, incorporating the four key subjects of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It involves students from 17,000 schools in 40 different nations. The patron of the program is F1 founder Bernie Ecclestone. The program requires students to use specialised computer software to design, manufacture, test and then race miniature air powered Formula One cars.

In November 2013, three teams from Balga Senior High School entered the WA state finals of the F1 school program. This is no mean feat—creating these miniature race cars and tracks takes several months of planning and design which students do on top of their regular school work. Balga Senior High School was competing against schools with bigger budgets, better technology and better resources. Notwithstanding this, the team I had the pleasure of meeting won the junior development class at the state titles which afforded them the opportunity to compete in the national titles here in Canberra.

At the national awards ceremony Amirali, Bakr, Asung, Dat and Hae Ser impressed the judges with their F1 creation called 'Cheetah a Power' and went home with the encouragement award in their division. Their involvement in the competition enabled them to develop project management, business planning, public speaking, marketing and collaboration skills, and this is a remarkable achievement for five students who just a few years ago had little or no English.

I congratulate the team on their award which recognises the incredible motivation of these students in overcoming language and cultural barriers and having the confidence to succeed. I also commend the role played by Balga Senior High School and its dedicated teachers, who provided ongoing support to the students. Under the leadership of principal Geoff Harris, these teachers believe in what they do and give the students the inspiration to achieve. I am a great fan of what Balga Senior High School does in my electorate. They have a very diverse school community and they always roll up their sleeves and get the job done of making sure those students get the best out of their high school education.