



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Bradfield Electorate: 40K Foundation

SPEECH

Wednesday, 18 June 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Fletcher, Paul, MP

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Mr FLETCHER (Bradfield—Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Communications) (09:45): I am pleased to rise to pay tribute to the impressive work of the 40K Foundation, an organisation which was established by a man named Clary Castrission, who grew up in my electorate of Bradfield. Just a few weeks ago I was able to attend an event held at the home of Dr Rick and Amanda Porter in Gordon in my electorate where there was a briefing provided to supporters of the work of the 40K Foundation.

This extraordinary organisation was conceived of by a group of young Australians and was triggered by a visit that some of them took to India. They were struck by the poverty that they came across there and, with the enthusiasm of youth, they decided they would fund the construction of a new school. In fact, they came up with the name 40K because they estimated that building the school would cost \$40,000. The school has been built in a community outside of Bangalore. It ended up costing some 10 times more than their initial estimate but is now operational and serves over 200 children. It is called the Banyan school.

The work of Clary Castrission and the other young Australians involved in the 40K Foundation in achieving this is really quite remarkable. But they have not stopped there. They are evolving what they are doing towards being a social enterprise which works to deliver educational opportunities to children in India who otherwise would not get them. Their current model is to deliver teaching in English and mathematics into a range of villages in India. They use tablet computers to deliver the education. They have a model where they find somebody in each village who can help with the administration but who does not do the teaching because the teaching is provided by the device and by the children teaching themselves.

The other thing they do is charge a small amount to parents for children to have this educational opportunity because they want to provide something that is sufficiently valued by the parents that they will pay a small but material amount for the education of these children.

It is a very impressive venture conceived by a group of young Australians, many of them from my electorate of Bradfield, that began as a purely charitable operation. It is evolving into a sustainable social enterprise applying business principles to address a social problem—in this case children in India not getting the education that would change their lives. It aims to provide that education for a tangible and significant number of children.