



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Moreton Electorate: Lunar New Year

SPEECH

Monday, 13 February 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Perrett, Graham, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr PERRETT (Moreton—Opposition Whip) (10:37): Gong xi fa cai. As you well know, the Chinese diaspora in Moreton, and across Australia in fact, has been celebrating Lunar New Year for a few weeks—dancing lions, fireworks, great food and family and friends coming together. Unfortunately, because I have been a little busy with an inquiry looking into section 18C amendments to the Racial Discrimination Act, I have not been able to go to as many of the Chinese New Year events—or Lunar New Year events—in my electorate as I would have liked. However, on Friday night I attended the Chinese New Year celebrations of the Lions Club of Brisbane Chinese. It was a wonderful event well attended by community leaders and politicians—and wannabe politicians. Also, on Saturday I joined the Taiwanese Friendship Association and the Hakka Association to attend the Lunar New Year event that they had at the Sunnybank Performing Arts centre. In fact, DC, the president of the Hakka Association, gave me a wonderful shirt that I wore. I am sure that anyone who follows me on Twitter would know that it is a beautiful shirt, and I look forward to wearing it on every occasion—although I will not repeat what my wife said when I wore it home!

Running from Australia Day right through to the weekend just gone, Lunar New Year is a great sign. Sadly, it signals the end of summer days on the beach between Monday and Friday and the fact that I can only get to the beach on the weekend! The year of the rooster is significant—I know it comes between the year of the monkey and the year of the dog. As the father of rooster, I know what they are like. In fact, 2017 is a fire rooster year, which occurs once in every 60 years. The fire roosters are trustworthy with a strong sense of timekeeping and responsibility at work.

At the event yesterday, the Hakka Association event, I announced that I am going to be working with the member for Maranoa, Mr Littleproud, on a project to track down the names and recognise the Chinese community in my home town of St George, because sadly a fire back in the early seventies wiped out a lot of the grave markers that designated Chinese people in the cemetery in St George. We are going to work on a memorial, track down the names and recognise them, because it is a big part of the Chinese community to make sure that you recognise your ancestors. I look forward to working with the Balonne Shire Council and also with the member for Maranoa and, more importantly, with my Chinese community, led by Lewis Lee, to recognise that. We will be convening a meeting shortly to commence that process.