



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Youth With a Mission**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 20 August 2012**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 20 August 2012  
**Page** 9225  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Prentice, Jane, MP

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

**Mrs PRENTICE** (Ryan) (10:48): I recently had the opportunity to join my colleague the member for Herbert, Mr Ewen Jones, to support the relaunch of the YWAM medical ship *Pacific Link*, which is doing significant work to help our near neighbours in remote areas of Papua New Guinea. Headquartered in Townsville and under the direction of CEO Ken Mulligan, YWAM—Youth With a Mission—is a Christian charity that offers global opportunities for volunteers to serve, build, care and connect with individuals and communities. YWAM Medical Ships is a growing organisation which aims to expand its partnership and reach within Papua New Guinea. This includes further training, development and capacity building for locals, greater and more frequent access to health care, and community development projects.

YWAM Medical Ships have been actively involved in the Western and Gulf provinces of Papua New Guinea since July 2010. By the end of 2011 YWAM had already delivered on more than 50,000 health outcomes in developing communities and worked with 356 villages which had accessed YWAM medical ships. During this time YWAM has been concentrating on: building relationships with communities, river charting, surveying, assessments, training local health workers and providing health care.

In working with locals, YWAM have repeatedly witnessed the desperation of the villagers for basic health care. Villagers report that they often feel overlooked, as little to no health patrols regularly visit their area.

Many of the villages are without healthcare workers, and those that do have a healthcare worker say they are struggling with a lack of supplies and support. In fact, many of the villages to which YWAM provides services have not had health patrols for several years and in some cases never.

Without any clear charting or mapping of the villages, YWAM has also been concentrating on river charting the regions, which is uncovering valuable information for long-term community development. YWAM is currently actively involved in some of the most remote parts of the Gulf and Western Provinces in Papua New Guinea. By using their ship, they are able to overcome issues of isolation and lack of infrastructure to provide training and health care for villagers in their home environment. At the recent relaunch of the *Pacific Link* in Port Moresby, we had a presentation from Dr Daryl Holmes of 1300SMILES, who not only volunteers but also provides dentists, assistants and supplies from his own practice at no charge to support YWAM and treat local villagers who have never had proper and regular access to dental treatment. It was a great opportunity to experience firsthand what it is like to live and work aboard a medical ship such as the *Pacific Link* and to meet the volunteers who do such a wonderful job supporting rural and remote communities of the Gulf and Western Provinces.

I commend the work of YWAM and the volunteers on the medical ship for the outstanding work they are undertaking for our near neighbours in Papua New Guinea. It is crucial that we support this work so that they can expand their outreach services to help more people in the remote areas of Papua New Guinea. It is inspiring to see a non-government organisation providing such efficient and effective services for our Pacific neighbours. I congratulate Mike Reynolds and Sir Rabbie Namaliu on their support and assistance.