



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Fowler Electorate: Courage to Care Exhibition

SPEECH

Wednesday, 25 March 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Hayes, Chris, MP

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Mr HAYES (Fowler—Chief Opposition Whip) (09:55): Last week I attended the launch of the Courage to Care exhibition and education program conducted at Liverpool Library. Courage to Care is a community outreach initiative aimed at educating students from year 5 through to high school about the importance of standing up to discrimination and bullying. This is a most thought-provoking program that encourages young people to identify things that matter in our community—things such as harmony, tolerance and social inclusion. More importantly, the program demonstrates that these values should never, ever be taken for granted. Young people are encouraged to make a stand against injustice and be part of shaping our community for the future. The program draws on the experience of Holocaust survivors to inspire courage in young people to stand up for victims, and to show that injustice—particularly prejudice and intolerance—can flourish where people do nothing.

At the launch, I was asked to speak about the harmony and humanity of the Courage to Care, particularly based on my experience representing the most multicultural community in the country. Mine is a very vibrant community. It has become defined by its diversity in culture, traditions and religion, and stands, I believe, as an example to the nation of the virtues of multiculturalism. I believe that multiculturalism is one of the greatest strengths that we have in this country, and we are a very fortunate nation because we can actually learn from many different cultures.

But, with the many benefits that diversity can bring, I know and acknowledge that it has challenges. Blending people from different cultural backgrounds can sometimes open the door to ignorance and a lack of understanding. We know the impact that racism can have on people. It is certainly hurtful. It is shameful. It undermines our sense of personal security and safety, and it alienates people from our broader community.

Every child deserves the right to be accepted, to be proud of their cultural background and to be encouraged to reach their full potential. We all need to have the courage to question beliefs and attitudes that allow for ignorance and discrimination, even if they are confined to small pockets of our society. Courage to Care aims to instil these important values and qualities in the youngest members of our community. I congratulate Andrew Havas, Chairman of Courage to Care New South Wales, and his team on this important and creative initiative. I believe it will do wonders in encouraging young minds to understand that we do have a responsibility to stand against injustice in our community.