



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Electorate of Rankin: Centre Education Program

SPEECH

Wednesday, 18 March 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker Emerson, Craig, MP	Question No.

Dr EMERSON (Rankin—Minister for Small Business, Independent Contractors and the Service Economy and Minister Assisting the Finance Minister on Deregulation) (9.45 am)—Today in the federal parliament I pay tribute to the wonderful work being done by the Centre Education Program based in Kingston in Logan City, which is in the electorate of Rankin. The Centre Education Program has been operating in the area for 18 years, and it is for children who have been alienated from mainstream education. It provides an opportunity and a place for them to re-engage with learning. The Centre Education Program at Kingston has the personal ethos of Edmund Rice, the founder of the Christian Brothers, and that is an ethos that is inclusive, just, relevant to its time, and centred in the Christian tradition based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. They operate on the basis of four principles: respect, participation, being safe and legal, and being fair dinkum—another phrase for honest. The people who do this wonderful work are Dale Murray, who is in charge of a number of these programs around Queensland—there are about six, and I believe that Dale is extending the program into other states—and, at the school itself, Lorraine Browne and her team, who do a fantastic job.

I have been to the school on several occasions now. They were the beneficiaries of the first round of computers in schools, and that was terrific for them. But they deserve our support, because these young people have had really bad things happen in their lives and, for one reason or another, just cannot cope with mainstream schooling. They may have been excluded from state schools in the local area or maybe they just cannot hack it in mainstream schools. They say to me that the Centre Education Program is their second-chance school. And every time I go there I get really emotional because you see young children whose lives are being put back together and who are being given an opportunity.

These are wonderful people who do this work. I know that they perform a very important service there—not only for the children, who are just terrific kids, but also for the state schools, because if those kids stay in the state schools there is inevitably some disruption in those schools. I hope that they continue to get support from both levels of government. They have been supported strongly by the government in Queensland and the federal government. They are a low socioeconomic school and so would be in line for funding, hopefully at the end of the year. But I just cannot put into words how grateful we are for the fantastic job that Lorraine Browne, her team and Dale Murray do on behalf of some of the most disadvantaged kids in Australia.