



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADJOURNMENT

Fadden Electorate: Government Spending

SPEECH

Monday, 1 June 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Robert, Stuart, MP

Source House
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Responder
Question No.

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (9.55 pm)—Mr Speaker, what a pleasure it is to remain in the House with you this evening! I rise to continue to give my very vocal support to the Gold Coast City Council's application to the Australian government's Jobs Fund program for much-needed social infrastructure in Labrador. I urge the government to accept and support that application to the Jobs Fund. To remind the House, the rapidly growing Gold Coast faces an enormous shortfall of appropriate social infrastructure to serve the growing needs of the population. Indeed, my electorate of Fadden is the fastest growing electorate in the nation.

The Gold Coast City Council has made a concerted effort on a number of fronts to rectify this situation and, as part of this strategy, has used funds to buy strategic sites that can be developed for social and recreational use. In 2007, the council authorised formal negotiations with the Uniting Church for the purchase of their site at Billington Street, Labrador for recreation and community purposes. The site adjoins Arthur Downes Park and Baden Robin Park, both of which have existing infrastructure, including barbecues, play equipment, tennis courts, toilets, a very basic skate area, and two halls for the Guides and Scouts. The site is also centrally located and close to public transport, has access to a range of services, has employment opportunities and is very close to other recreational areas. The site has been functioning as a church since the mid-1950s, but there has also been a large youth and community facility on the site for 25 years.

The project for which my vocal support has been sought and for which funds are being sought from the government's Jobs Fund is the redevelopment of this site as a multifunctional community hub with particular elements that include adult education, counselling services, opportunities for social enterprise, arts and cultural spaces, youth-specific facilities, a men's shed—for blokes to build stuff!—and enhanced connectivity to other parklands. Keep in mind that the suburb of Labrador has experienced a significant increase in unemployment from 5.9 to seven per cent, and it is anticipated that that will rise, hence the application to the Jobs Fund.

I urge the government to get behind this great initiative in the suburb of Labrador. The northern Gold Coast has very few specific recreational places where young people can be involved. In Labrador, this is

the only one. As we move north to Runaway Bay, there is another centre there on the corner of Lae Drive and Olsen Avenue. The Oxenford and Coomera Community Youth Centre is another one. But there are only three or four centres, and they pale into insignificance compared to what the northern Gold Coast needs.

I thought I would also see what other expenditure is happening in the suburb of Labrador, so I went to www.economicstimulus.gov.au, that great site on the World Wide Web—which, funnily enough, does not meet Labor's own guidelines, with Minister Albanese spruiking the great Labor initiatives in defiance of his own advertising guidelines. Be that as it may, I noticed there were six projects in my area funded under the National School Pride program, including three at a school called Kentville State School. Now, I pride myself on knowing all the schools in my electorate and I was not familiar with the Kentville State School. I am sure you can imagine my surprise when I found the school was a co-educational school situated in the Lockyer Valley, on the south-western edge of the Laidley shire, some 200 to 300 kilometres away from the thriving metropolis of Fadden. I encourage the member for Grayndler and indeed his department, if they are going to put up such information and spruik the benefits of their stimulus package, to try and get it right.

The SPEAKER—Order! It being 10 pm, the debate is interrupted.