



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Hume Electorate: Green Army

SPEECH

Monday, 24 March 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Taylor, Angus, MP

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Mr TAYLOR (Hume) (10:33): I would like to report on a growing excitement in my electorate about an idea to encourage youth participation and training in the community. Mr Deputy Speaker, you might have heard it mentioned once or twice before. It is called the Green Army. It is only a few months away from kick-off in July, and already on the ground in Hume teams of organisers are ready to swing young people into action. There are no fewer than five Hume Green Army projects to be rolled out, and each is of great importance to the local community in motivating young people to participate and to take on responsibility.

We have a great project around Sutton, Bywong and Womboin, in the southern part of my electorate, bordering the ACT. A Green Army team of about nine people, and a team supervisor under the guidance of the Palerang Council, will be rehabilitating an area known as the Greenways. The Greenways is a unique and well-used network of recreation and conservation trails. The team will work on repairing erosion gullies, improving pedestrian access by creating small pedestrian bridges, revegetating along the Greenways and controlling weeds.

In Goulburn a project team will be improving the ecosystem of the existing Goulburn Wetlands. This will be a collaborative effort between council, as the landowners, and a number of community groups. At Yass there will be ongoing restoration of about two kilometres of Riverbank Park, with the replanting of local plant species and the creation of viewing points, walking tracks, signs and a fitness trail. With several schools within a short walking distance, it will encourage young students to learn about the local river environment. A Green Army project at Picton, in the northern end of my electorate, organised by Wollondilly Shire Council, will continue to restore Stonequarry Creek by planting native species and removing weeds holding up water flows. The fifth project I would like to mention, one with a fantastic name, is the Tussock Tamers in Action project in the Upper Lachlan Shire. Over the past couple of years 180 farming families have participated in local tussock tamer workshops in the shire and 300 families have attended field days. All of this is aimed at reducing the No. 1 problem identified by local Landcare: serrated tussock. I look forward to following the progress of the young team under the guidance of the Upper Lachlan Landcare group.

Youth unemployment is high in parts of my electorate; youth participation in the local community is low. The Green Army program is a fantastic initiative to encourage young people who are looking to participate. An allowance is paid, training is provided and they will be helping to improve the environment. As the program is ongoing, I encourage constituents, via their councils or via community groups, to nominate other worthy projects for subsequent rounds of funding. I know the response from my local communities will continue to be incredibly positive and I look forward to informing the House of the results of this opening round.