



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADJOURNMENT

Kingston Electorate: Southern Football League

SPEECH

Thursday, 12 May 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Ms RISHWORTH

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(Kingston) (NaN.NaN pm)

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (11:56): I rise today to congratulate the Southern Football League for celebrating their 125th birthday. I recently had the pleasure of attending the first celebration in the year-long celebrations, at the Reynella Football Club. The Southern Football League can boast 125 years. It is not often that a community organisation can boast such a long, continuous impact on the local community. In 1886 the Southern Football League was formed to promote a local, grassroots footy competition in the southern suburbs of Adelaide. It had just four club groups at the time. They were Aldinga, Sellicks, McLaren Vale and Willunga. Since that time it has grown significantly, and at its peak had 29 local clubs. At this point, due to amalgamations, there are currently 15 member clubs. They are Noarlunga, Brighton, Edwardstown, Happy Valley, Flagstaff Hill, Reynella, Morphettville Park, Aldinga, Morphett Vale, O'Sullivan's Beach/Lonsdale, Cove, Port Noarlunga, Christies Beach, Hackham and Marion. They provide fierce competition for one another.

I think this is a real milestone for the league. This league relies significantly on volunteers. Over 4,500 local residents participate in this competition each weekend. If you then include all their families and the young people who come along to support these clubs, it is a significant number of people. The league prides itself on players and spectators ensuring that the match is family friendly so that all people can enjoy it. The league organises grade A and B matches for under-14s, under-16s and under-18s each Saturday, as well as C-grade matches.

So whether it is young people coming up and honing their skills with the hope of playing in the SANFL or AFL leagues or whether it is older people—I know that there are some older people who like to keep going, to try to keep fit—this is an excellent local sporting organisation. These very active clubs provide a real option for people in our community. But they could not do it without their volunteer base, and 125 years is a long time for volunteers to be selflessly giving so that the club is open, there is food available, there are referees for the games and the pies and pasties are warmed up. These are all things that local volunteers have been doing right across the southern suburbs. There are also a lot of sponsors of

the league who ensure that this league continues to flourish and to give opportunities. I would like to thank the sponsors, the clubs and the league itself for giving a real opportunity to people in the southern suburbs. I specifically congratulate Mr Craig Warden, who is the president of the league. He has said, 'As President of the Southern Football League, I acknowledge that we are heavily indebted to our volunteer base who are the backbone of this competition.' One hundred and twenty-five years is a very long time to be continually providing this service to the community. The league has a year of celebrations this year with their focus on junior sport. They will be having a number of celebrations that, once again, volunteers have organised. They have a memorial sticker, which I can supply for your car—even the cars of people outside—so that you can proudly talk about 125 years of these clubs. It is a real achievement.

I have been down to see some of the games that teams from the Southern Football League play, and I would say that it is real footy; it is not polished like the AFL games. It does not always go to game plan—sometimes the ball goes the wrong way, and a whole range of other things happen—but is about getting in and having a go. At the same time, we are seeing a lot of great young footballers who are being mentored in the Southern Football League and who are coming through and making a real contribution to the SANFL, and some of them make it to AFL football and have an opportunity to pursue their dreams. I conclude by wishing the Southern Football League and all its clubs are very happy 125th birthday.