



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Employment

SPEECH

Thursday, 20 October 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker	O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.	

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (10:21): Youth unemployment is a problem the world over. In Spain it is over 40 per cent. In Greece it is over 50 per cent. Relatively speaking, you could say we are lucky. Youth unemployment in Australia is currently around 13 per cent, which is comparable with rates in the UK and the US. But it is in rural and regional areas where it is too high, hovering around 20 per cent.

In an address to the National Press Club last month, the Minister for Social Services, Christian Porter, outlined a new direction for welfare reform called the priority investment approach—an evidence based welfare policy that will, among other things, help identify new ideas for providing avenues out of welfare and into employment for those at high risk of welfare dependency.

The evidence thus far points to three particular groups facing poor long-term outcomes—young carers, young parents and young students. The common word here, of course, is 'young'. I pay tribute to this approach, including the \$96 million to be spent on a Try, Test and Learn Fund which will encourage people to effectively BYO their ideas and put forward their ideas to improve lives and increase people's self-reliance over time. I stand in the chamber today to encourage non-government organisations to BYO their new ideas to address youth unemployment through youth entrepreneurship.

If a young person cannot find a job then there is no reason why society cannot give them the tools and the discipline to create their own. Starting your own business is not for everyone, but there are thousands of young Australians across the country who have the capacity to do so. In my experience, young people struggle with three things in starting their own business: experience, networks and money. Our challenge is to find new ways to wrap these three things around young people and help them unleash their creative genius to start their own businesses.

I take inspiration from our local groups in the seat of Fairfax on this—groups such as Spark Bureau and the innovation centre and programs such as the Startup Weekend for Youth and the Mayor's Telstra Technology Awards. One group I am close to is Generation Innovation, along with some terrific schools, including Burnside State High School and Mountain Creek State High School, who are empowering young people through enterprise. Youth entrepreneurship as a solution to youth unemployment is worthy of further exploration. I thank the chamber for this opportunity to speak on it.