



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Sunshine Coast: Small Business

SPEECH

Monday, 29 July 2019

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Monday, 29 July 2019	Source House
Page 1267	Proof No
Questioner	Responder
Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (10:56): Everybody knows the Australian economy is going strong. We know that we're back in surplus. We know that we've maintained our AAA credit rating. We know that we have recorded the largest growth in jobs in our history, and we know that we're growing faster than any other OECD country, bar the United States, with our \$100 billion infrastructure plan and the largest recapitalisation of our defence forces in our history. But we can't forget the importance of small and medium-sized businesses in driving that growth.

In my region of the Sunshine Coast there are about 46,000 small and medium-sized businesses. If you believe the likes of one of Australia's leading demographers, Bernard Salt, the Sunshine Coast is arguably the most entrepreneurial region in Australia. If you then believe the findings of one of Australia's most renowned sociologists, Hugh Mackay, few places in Australia have such a high level of human capital as the Sunshine Coast. These two go hand in hand. We know, as small and medium-sized businesses get off the ground, there is a great need for them to build a network that is supported within the local community. It was a delight, therefore, last Friday, to attend the Facebook Community Boost program at Surfair in Marcoola. And it was no surprise at all when the organisers told me that they had not received such a crowd elsewhere. Again, this goes to the entrepreneurial importance of the Sunshine Coast and the fact that small and medium-sized businesses continue to go out and embrace new ideas, innovations and technologies.

Amidst the crowd was one of the founders of the Sunshine Coast theatre company, a start-up that came through the not-for-profit organisation called Generation Innovation, which I founded five years ago and which every single year sees people between the ages of 15 and 25 start their own businesses in the community. Organisations like Generation Innovation, which was born on the Sunshine Coast, are very technology-savvy. The head office is, in fact, the website. That's where people go to register and get information. That's where a platform is run for crowdfunding and for voting on peoples' favourites. And, of course, Facebook provides the meeting rooms for the small entrepreneurial groups as they move forward.

I want to take this opportunity to make the point that, not only is the Australian economy going well: the Sunshine Coast is the most entrepreneurial region in the country and local businesses are embracing technology like never before.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Zimmerman): In accordance with standing order 193, the time for members' constituency statements has expired.