



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Sport**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 2 December 2019**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (19:45): This coalition government has spent over \$2.5 billion on sport and sporting activity since it came to office, an extraordinary feat—about \$950 million on sporting infrastructure for local and national organisations, \$113 million on the integrity of sport, \$710 million in direct funding for our current and future elite athletes, \$270 million for programs supporting Indigenous communities and their athletes, and \$10 million that I know we put towards the 2032 Olympic bid.

I could go on, but the question is: why? Why do we invest in sport? The answer is: because sport represents far more than just running around and kicking a footy or throwing a javelin. Sport is also about social inclusion. Sport is an opportunity for communities to bind together. Sporting organisations today play a far larger role in our civil society than they have in the past, and that's only becoming more the case as time goes on. We all love our sport and Australia is renowned for it. I think everybody in this chamber would remember that first time they threw on goggles and jumped in the pool or first threw a football or a netball, or whatever it is. We love our sport. We also recognise that sport keeps us healthy, not just physically but emotionally. It's been proven time and again that if we are active as a people our mental health is so much better. I don't know about you, Deputy Speaker, but I feel better if I do a bit of exercise in the morning. I just have a better attitude for the day. Sport is vitally important.

A vision of this government is to see Australia become the most active and healthy place in the world. That is very much encapsulated in our 2030 strategy for sport or, as we call it, *Sport 2030*. As part of that strategy we have a KPI, which is to reduce the inactivity of Australians by 15 per cent by the year 2030. We need to make sure, therefore, that this enormous funding we're putting towards sport hits the ground at the local level.

I was delighted only a few weeks ago to attend the launch of RideScore Active Schools on the Sunshine Coast. Full credit to We Ride Australia, who have championed this program. The federal government is tipping in about \$225,000. We're working in collaboration with the Sunshine Coast Regional Council, with the state government, with Stockland at their new development and a range of other partners but, in particular, We Ride Australia.

This program allows schoolchildren to ride to school—it encourages them. Up to about 70 per cent of kids get dropped off by car at school every day. You can imagine not just their health while they're young but the behaviours as their lives go on if they have the opportunity to get into the habit of getting on a scooter, getting on a bike or just walking to school. This particular RideScore Active Schools program will be rolled out at nine different schools on the Sunshine Coast, probably helping around 800 kids next year. The idea is that it overlays technology onto bicycles. So when children leave home and then clock in their bike at school it sends an automatic message to their parents, to mum and dad. It means, too, that there are safe routes mapped out for them so that they can go to school in a very safe way. In other words, it keeps kids active, it keeps kids safe and it gives mums, dads and carers peace of mind. This is yet another very simple but tangible way that we as a federal government are ensuring that our money spent on sport helps at the grassroots and keeps our kids in particular healthy and active. I'm delighted to be part of it.