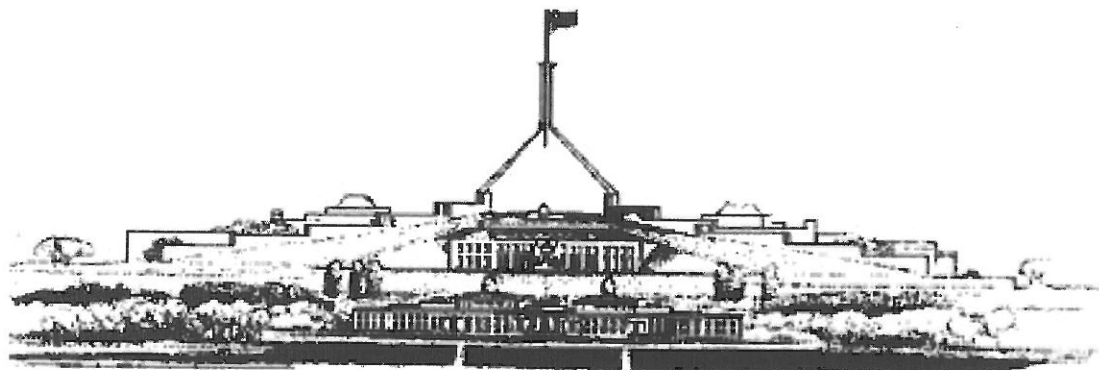




COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

**Riverina Electorate: Primary
Centre for Science Education**

PROCEDURAL TEXT

Thursday, 7 July 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROCEDURAL TEXT

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Speaker	Question No.

Riverina Electorate: Primary Centre for Science Education

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Mr McCORMACK (Riverina) (09:54): Science is the cornerstone of Australia's productive economic and social future. Through their work as industry technologists, researchers, inventors, manufacturers, information technology developers, information communicators and agricultural producers, scientists have helped to create once unimaginable economic and technological opportunities. Science gives us new insight into the natural world, broadens our knowledge and shows us how to ask questions and solve all sorts of problems. Above all, science has transformed daily life and continues to do so, enabling us to discover ways to develop knowledge and resources to make and do the things that will bring economic and social wellbeing.

At present Australia is, unfortunately, experiencing a shortage of skilled science professionals to meet industry demand, particularly in rural and regional Australia. It takes six years to move a student from year 11 through to graduation, so it is imperative to act immediately to address this gap. The Primary Industry Centre for Science Education, PICSE, is a national strategy of collaboration between universities, their regional communities and local primary industries to attract students into tertiary science and to increase the number of skilled professionals in agribusiness and research institutions. PICSE is the national infrastructure for a supply chain which provides the next generation of researchers and industry scientists. The primary industries targeted by PICSE are those which focus on the sciences of agriculture, aquaculture, ecology, horticulture, fisheries, water security, sustainability, climate action and the environment.

In 2007, PICSE's presence grew, with an activity centre being opened at Charles Sturt University at Wagga Wagga in my electorate of Riverina. The centre operates from the EH Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation, with Emma Wordsworth of Wagga Wagga taking up the role of science education officer. Since Ms Wordsworth joined the department as the science education officer, many schools from around my

electorate have got on board to promote the PICSE program. Schools in Ardlethan, Aria Park, Barellan, Ganmain, Griffith, Grong Grong, Hillston and Wagga Wagga have done this.

The outcomes of PICSE are many and varied, and it is a wonderful organisation. They work with schools, teachers and students to encourage greater engagement in science, and linking schools with local industries is one of their main aims. The centre in Wagga Wagga has attracted much interest, and recently Amber Tullberg, a Mount Austin High School student, secured a spot in PICSE's industry placement camp and travelled to the north-west of Tasmania in December last year to participate in that program. This local student was more than thrilled with the opportunity offered to her. And Nakita Smith, a science teacher at Mount Austin High School, received a travelling teacher scholarship. She travelled to Hobart to participate in teacher professional development before joining Amber for three days on the student camp. This is a great initiative which teaches our students the importance of science and provides hope for a better future within the industry.

Michael McCormack MP

FEDERAL MEMBER FOR RIVERINA

18 July 2011

Assoc/Prof David Russell,
National Director,
Primary Industry Centre for Science Education
School of Agricultural Science,
Cradle Coast Campus,
University of Tasmania,
Private Bag 3503, BURNIE
TASMANIA, 7320



Dear Professor Russell

I have enclosed for your records a copy of the speech I made in Parliament on Thursday July 7 2011.

It was a privilege to speak on your Primary Centre for Science Education program which I believe will benefit the community as well as future generations.

The program is a wonderful initiative and the excitement it holds was evident in the students' wonderful attitude at the cocktail party held in Parliament House on June 21 2011.

Yours sincerely,



Michael McCormack MP
Federal Member for Riverina
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