



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Braddon Electorate: Horsehead Water Ski Club

SPEECH

Tuesday, 22 June 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 22 June 2010
Page 63
Questioner
Speaker Sidebottom, Sid, MP

Source House
Proof Yes
Responder
Question No.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (8.55 pm)—In my electorate we have the Horsehead Water Ski Club, which is the oldest continuously operating waterski club in Australia. It was established in 1958. Not only is it the oldest established waterskiing club in Australia

— was designed—a sophisticated mast-like aluminium structure. It used stainless steel cable struts and was supported by foam floats. All 120 skiers underwent a second round of training. Ropes were doubled in length, bringing the total rope length to 12 kilometres. They made three attempts and then a fourth, and they all failed. But, as is the Braddon way, they persisted; they did not give up.

Mr Griffin—It's the coldest as well, isn't it?

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—The oldest indeed. It is also a world record holder. I want to talk about the dream that led to that world record—I am sure you would like to share this. It occurred in those chilly waters of Strahan on Sunday, 28 March after many attempts. I keep you in suspense, so I will tell the story.

In 2010 more designs were developed. Another designer was brought on board and a new 60-metre aluminium boom was designed. It cost thousands of dollars. I think the club raised \$24,000, but they were still \$20,000 short. Over Christmas 2009, 124 standing skiers were selected, more rope was used and lots of people helped for two days. In early January 2010, they worked through the night, but unfortunately their fifth, sixth and seventh attempts failed. Then, on Sunday, 28 March, 114 skiers crossed the line and broke the world record of 100. Five other groups from around the globe had tried unsuccessfully to break the record.

In 1980 a group of people—including Nick Wilson, an ex-student of mine, and David Bennett and his family—saw a video of the then current world record involving 30 skiers being drawn behind a single boat. They thought they would get together and set out to try to break that world record. From 1980 to 1983 they put a plan together. By 2000 the record had gone from 30, to 50, to 53, to 80 and to 100 people being towed behind a single boat—truly remarkable. The record moved between Western Australia and the United States.

If I may finish with a 30-second burst, I have a little email from David and Nick, who both participated. It reads:

Thanks Sid.

In 2003 there was even more interest in trying to tackle the world record. The Grining family from World Heritage Cruises in Strahan offered a magnificent boat to the club to tow the skiers one nautical mile, which was the requirement for the record.

We reckon the effort has taken 10,000 man hours and has involved a team of 1000.

Mr Danby interjecting—

Only in Tasmania would people like the Grinings throw you the keys to their whole workshop and \$5 million boat and let you work overnight to drill 70 holes in it when they were 300km away in Hobart!!

A real Tasmanian effort.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM—Then, in 2004, brother from Port Melbourne, they brought in a boom designer. They tested, recruited and brought together 150 skiers from the ages of 12 to 65. They used six kilometres of rope and 120 different lengths of rope, but unfortunately the cruise boat was sold and that was the end of that attempt.

It was a fantastic effort. They are now the world record holders for towing 114 skiers behind a magnificent vessel.

In 2007, the Grining family bought a new boat, worth \$5.2 million, and offered that to the Horsehead waterskiing club. So, on 2 February 2008, they made their first real attempt. They had a 60-metre laminated timber beam, but unfortunately that attempt and a second attempt failed. In 2009, a retired rocket scientist from NASA was brought on board. A new boom

The SPEAKER—Order! It being 9.00 pm, the debate is interrupted.