



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Main Committee**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Braddon Electorate: National Primary  
Industry Centre for Science Education**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 17 June 2010**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Thursday, 17 June 2010	<b>Source</b> House
<b>Page</b> 76	<b>Proof</b> Yes
<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Sidebottom, Sid, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Mr SIDEBOTTOM** (Braddon) (9.39 am)—I would like to talk about PICSE today—and I mean not the pixies at the bottom of the garden but a terrific program that was initiated in my electorate of Braddon by David Russell and a number of his colleagues from the University of Tasmania. PICSE stands for National Primary Industry Centre for Science Education. It promotes science and particularly agricultural science and primary industries in our schools and encourages people towards science and particularly towards science as applied to the primary industries. It was a fantastic dream and idea of Associate Professor David Russell, and it finally received Commonwealth funding of a number of millions of dollars and now has spread nationally. I want to again congratulate David and his team on this fantastic program.

Nationally in 2009 there were 223 schools engaged in this education program, 7,529 students actively signed up and engaged, 99 local industries engaged and 199 science teachers on professional development through the PICSE program. That is a fantastic story, especially as it encourages people not just into the sciences but particularly into the areas that affect primary industries. Let us face it: if we cannot grow our own food and if we do not have people involved in producing and growing our own food then we will be reliant on others. For food security, that is not a good story.

The program has just done its major evaluation report and has a fantastic report card because of that. Some of the major activities undertaken by the PICSE program are as follows. There is teacher professional development, which is absolutely crucial to encourage teachers, and teachers are great influencers on students. There is a student camp and industry placement program, which is fantastic. They go out and do work experience in real, live industries. That is very important. There are science investigation awards to encourage people to take up investigative projects. Finally, there is the science education national forum. Some of the 190 investigation projects that were presented in my electorate in 2009 included titles such as ‘Acid rain affecting pea plant growth’, ‘Plant fertiliser—what’s hot and what’s not’ and ‘Do different detergents affect algal growth?’ (*Time expired*)