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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Primary Industry Centre for Science Education

SPEECH

Wednesday, 22 June 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker Mr SIDEBOTTOM	Question No.

(Braddon) (NaN.NaN pm)

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (09:38): Good morning, colleagues. This morning I want to talk about PICSE, that is, the Primary Industry Centre for Science Education. This is a fantastic program that actually started in my electorate. I remember back in 1997-98, David Russell, who used to be a colleague of mine at the Don College, the senior secondary college in Devonport, had the idea of promoting science in general and, more specifically, science in agriculture as a program. Historically, this has proven to be a fantastic idea. David went on to try and get funding to create these centres for science education. He was successful in 2008 with my help and, I must say, with the help of the Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, Minister Carr, and the then education minister, Julia Gillard, in securing \$3.6 million towards the creation of PICSE.

PICSE started off as one centre for science education on the north-west coast of Tasmania and is now in nine centres throughout the country. It has tremendous collaboration and partnerships, as I mentioned, with a number of universities throughout the mainland, also with business partners and other auspicers, and most especially with many, many schools. I note that in the period to 2010, for instance, something like 45,000 students have had careers information presentations made to them. The centres have informed around 800 students in years 11 and 12 about study and career opportunities during specific science industry camps and specific industry placements. They have conducted professional development programs for nearly 900 secondary science teachers, using select primary industries to demonstrate the relevant science, and they have supported something like 4,000 secondary school students and their teachers in participation in science investigation awards. Some of the topics they are investigating at these high schools include the effect of oil spills on marine environments, vitamin C content in ageing lemons, what makes the best home desalination plant, the decomposition of food matter, and heart rates and CO₂ production. Last night Dominique Cottrell and Gabby Bennett received scholarships from PICSE. I congratulate them. I also congratulate David Russell and the whole PICSE education team. *(Time expired)*