

23 October 2008

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Lindsay Electorate: Filipino Community

Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (9.39 a.m.) — I rise to talk about the important contribution of Filipino Australians in my local community. Filipinos are the fifth largest ethnic group in my electorate, with more than 1,300 people speaking a Filipino language at home. They represent a greater proportion of the population in the Penrith local government area than in the greater Sydney region as a whole. Accordingly, we have a vibrant local Filipino community that is deeply committed to embracing the values of Australia while at the same time working to preserve and promote their culture.

A focal point for the local Filipino community has been the Philippine Language and Cultural Association of Australia, a not-for-profit organisation established in Penrith. PLCAA have driven a number of successful events over the past 18 months in Penrith and in the greater Western Sydney region to help educate young Filipinos about their cultural heritage and to extend to the broader community an opportunity to learn more about the Philippines. PLCAA's vision is to develop the ability of Australian Filipinos to communicate in the Filipino language, to make Australian Filipinos appreciate the value of knowing their Filipino heritage and to assist their development as individuals so they take an active role in the community—and they are indeed taking an active role and making a strong investment in the education and development of young people in my community.

Earlier this year, PLCAA organised a youth forum to help foster leadership among young Filipinos in our local area, at which I was honoured to be the guest speaker. In May this year the group opened a Saturday morning Penrith community Filipino school for young people aged 17 to 22 at the St Marys Senior Citizens Centre. Students are taught to converse in the Filipino language as well as traditional dances, music, crafts and cooking. The activities at the Saturday school are complemented by the Read Philippines Project, which was launched in Penrith in September last year. The project promotes greater understanding of Filipino culture through donations of Filipino and English language books and audiovisual material to the Penrith City Library.

I acknowledge the hard work of all the members of the PLCAA, who have proven to be excellent ambassadors for the Filipino community and exceptional contributors to our broader community. I acknowledge the efforts of Penrith City Council in supporting the local Filipino community—in particular, former mayors Pat Sheehy and Greg Davies. Much of this activity has also been encouraged and supported by the Philippines Consulate General in Sydney and personally by Consul General Maria Theresa Lazaro, who has attended many of the events held in Penrith. I would like to express my gratitude to the Consul General for her generous support.

Finally, I would like to note that the PLCAA are also leading the charge on a campaign for a social security agreement between the Philippines and Australia. This is something I have written to Minister Macklin about and will continue to advocate on.