



Speeches

Address at the Opening Of The Butterfly Ball

09/04/2005

Sydney

E&OE

It is a great pleasure to be here tonight, representing the Australian Government, at this charity "Butterfly Ball".

I would like to begin by acknowledging the elders and traditional owners from the Eora people on whose land we meet.

The Howard Government is a strong supporter of organisations like the Life Changing Experiences Foundation Ltd, which has organised this wonderful event.

Founded by music teacher, Jessica Brown, in September 2003, the Foundation has quickly established itself as a positive force acting on behalf of underprivileged and disadvantaged teenagers.

Jessica has devoted 10 years to educating and motivating young Australians.

She is a winner of the prestigious National Excellence in Teaching Award and after working in a finishing school she started *The Finishing Image*, a life skills and etiquette school for teenagers.

It was Jessica's personal goal to help alleviate the suffering of

disadvantaged and underprivileged youth, however, which led to her forming the Life Changing Experiences Foundation and the reason why we are here tonight.

The Foundation is a not for profit organisation which supports and nurtures underprivileged and disadvantaged youth by giving them the tools they need to build a happy and fulfilling life.

These tools are provided by the immediate support networks and long-term mentoring programs established by the Foundation.

The proceeds of this "Butterfly Ball" will help the Foundation with its Sister 2 sister mentoring project which reaches out to girls in need.

Sister 2 sister has attracted successful women to act as mentors to those teenage girls who need help to rebuild their psyche and outlook on life.

It involves a five day mentoring course at the start of a 12 months program designed to help teenage girls who have endured tough life circumstances.

Tonight's event features outstanding women such as Jessica, seven times world champion marathon swimmer, Shelley Taylor Smith and Miss World 2004 competitor, Miss Australia, Sara Davies.

These women and other high profile and inspiring women here tonight are role models for teenage girls in need.

By their actions and beliefs they can inspire the less well off and the abused to believe in themselves and grasp life's opportunities.

The leadership and inspiration provided by Jessica Brown's Foundation and programs such as Sister 2 sister extend far beyond the youths they are helping every day.

The Foundation is also providing a lead to the wider community within which it operates and the nation.

For its part the Howard Government is a strong supporter of mentoring to help improve the health and well being of young people including at risk youth.

Programs such as the Mentor Marketplace and Reconnect have improved the lives of tens of thousands of youths.

Our government also strongly encourages increased youth participation and leadership through initiatives including the National Youth Roundtable and National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group.

I would also encourage involvement with the Step to the Future Youth Leadership Forum, which equips students to become more self-reliant and to take advantage of opportunity in a rapidly changing world.

But for now I encourage everyone to listen to the wisdom of the following speakers and then to take full advantage of this wonderful event.