

ADJOURNMENT

Paradise Point Bowls Club

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (8.30 p.m.)—I have spoken before in this House about the great electorate of Fadden being the fastest-growing electorate in the nation. Indeed, community groups, volunteer organisations and sporting groups are the backbone of Fadden. They provide the social fabric and the opportunity for families and individuals to get together, which are so important in the local area. I am delighted to have recently been asked to be patron of the Paradise Point Bowls Club, which has serviced its local area since 1974 and has over 800 playing members. It is one of those great community organisations that work tirelessly to bring the community together. At a time when community can be seen to be coming apart at the seams, organisations like the Paradise Point Bowls Club are out there bridging the gap and working to bring the community together, with a great focus on social interaction as well as on competition within their chosen sport. Since 1974 the Paradise Point Bowls Club have raised substantial amounts of money for both CareFlight and the Salvation Army. They endeavour to have older players teach senior students from Coombabah State High School how to bowl. This not only increases the students' knowledge of a great sport at which we do very well in the Olympics—and I am looking forward to Beijing in six months—but, more importantly, connects the more established citizens of Paradise Point to the new generation in Coombabah. The Paradise Point Bowls Club also have regular social bowling competitions where members of the community can get together, especially more senior members.

I contend that it is these kinds of organisations that make an area enjoyable to live in, by providing a social outlet for people of the community to gather. I also raise the point that the previous Howard government so recognised the importance of these organisations that it established the volunteer small equipment grant to help support these organisations and their great work. In my electorate of Fadden this scheme has helped support many organisations ranging from the Paradise Point Scout Group to the Labrador and Pacific Pines Junior Australian Football Club. I note that the Labor Party during the election campaign promised to maintain the program, albeit with some changes. However, local sporting and community organisations like the Paradise Point Bowls Club are yet to see any evidence of this changed program.

Before coming in here this evening, I took the liberty of looking at the GrantsLINK website, which is meant to be the public's best source for finding out about all funding and grant assistance from all levels of government. Looking at the federal funding assistance, I did a search for volunteer grants. You can imagine my surprise when the site directed me to a website dealing with the funding of the last round whilst Mal Brough was the minister. This afternoon my staff called the hotline. The hotline is advertised by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. If you call, you will be told that something is coming. They do not know when and they cannot tell you the details. For the likes of the Paradise Point Bowls Club and many other organisations in Fadden—which I remind the House is the fastest-growing electorate in the nation—to go to the GrantsLINK website and receive information from the previous government, to call the hotline and be told, 'Something is coming; we do not know when and we cannot tell you the details,' is frankly not good enough. Volunteer organisations form the backbone of this nation and the backbone of the electorate of Fadden. If they are to continue to do the good work that we need them to do in this nation, they need our support and they need the government's support. Far be it from me to suggest that the government is not listening because the GrantsLINK website sends them into the abyss and the hotline number tells them, 'Nothing is available; we are still waiting.' But may I encourage the Rudd government to move expeditiously to put new funding opportunities in place so that worthy organisations can apply and these community organisations can continue to do great work. I salute them all, especially the Paradise Point Bowls Club, for their work in the electorate of Fadden.