



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Throsby Electorate: Top Blokes Foundation

SPEECH

Monday, 30 November 2015

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Speaker Jones, Stephen, MP	Question No.

Mr STEPHEN JONES (Throsby) (13:36): Today I asking parliament to join with me in congratulating Melissa Abu Gazaleh, the 2016 New South Wales Young Australian of the Year. Melissa is a resident of Kanahooka in my electorate of Throsby and is an inspiring young woman. In 2006, tired of seeing young men painted as drunk and violent no-hopers, Melissa established the Top Blokes Foundation, which is a youth led organisation in Wollongong that empowers young men to positively contribute to their local communities through volunteering and peer led programs. As CEO of Top Blokes, Melissa is helping Australia combat anti-social and risk-taking behaviours among young men and busting many negative stereotypes along the way.

Reaching thousands of 14- to 24-year olds each year, the Top Blokes Foundation fosters young men's social inclusion, resilience and mental health, while empowering them to contribute to their community through volunteering. Melissa's Junior Top Blokes Mentoring Program, for example, uses social education to challenge boys to address issues like alcohol, drugs, mental health, anger, masculinity and pornography. Melissa has also been selected in Australia's 100 Brightest Young Minds. Today, Melissa speaks across Australia on how to best address young men's health and well-being. So congratulations Melissa on behalf of the entire Australian parliament .