



Speech by

PHIL REEVES

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Hansard 5 October 2000

JAI TAURIMA; REGAN HARRISON; LOUDY TOURKY

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (10.21 a.m.): Similar to most Australians, I believe the past two weeks have been a highlight in our country's history. Last Thursday evening was a very special moment for me. Watching someone you know compete in the Olympics and being aware of what they have been through to get there is an emotional experience.

Jai Taurima not only jumped further than any other Australian has ever jumped, he entertained the 110,000 people at the Olympic stadium and millions around the world. Much has been written about Jai Taurima, mostly focusing on his unusual diet and his general attitude to his sport. I wish to inform people that there is more to Jai than his unusual ways. I remember being at Brisbane Airport with Jai's family around midnight one night during the Atlanta Games consoling Jai, who had remarkably been excluded from the Olympics by Athletics Australia. It would have been easy for Jai to quit athletics right there and then. Instead Jai refocused and made the hard decision to leave his family and friends and go to the AIS in Canberra. Jai's heartache was not complete. He went to the Commonwealth Games and equalled the jump of the winner but lost the gold medal on a count back. Last year he missed out on a medal at the world championships by a mere 1 centimetre. Jai has used all of these setbacks as a motivational force and pulled out an extreme performance.

Jai's story is one that can be used by anyone: we should keep following our dreams despite the setbacks we may suffer. Jai is a person who has not come from the elite of our society. He has overcome some major heartbreaks both personally and on the track and has now achieved greatness in front of the whole country and the rest of the world. Jai is a prime example that one does not have to be a gold medal winner to be a winner at the Olympics. Jai's family and friends have played a major part in his success and no Olympic athlete would be there without such support. Jai has given us all great entertainment with his superb performance, but above all else he has enjoyed himself. And isn't that what sport is all about?

I congratulate also Regan Harrison and Loudy Tourky, who come from the Mansfield electorate, on gaining medals in swimming and diving respectively.
