



Speech by

RONAN LEE

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 1 August 2001

TIGER 11 SOCCER TEAM

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (7.22 p.m.): I echo the previous member's respect for the Australian value of giving people a fair go. I wish to share a wonderful story of how my close-knit community in Brisbane's western suburbs has come together to help establish a soccer team for a group of young Afghani refugees. I briefly raised this issue in the House on another occasion and feel that it is certainly an appropriate time to provide an update to honourable members.

After arriving on our shores as refugees, many of these boys have been thrown into Australia's detention centres where, for months at a time, they have suffered treatment that I believe is unbefitting of life in Australia. Those who are lucky enough to be released are given temporary protection visas, and a number of them have been sent to our city with very little support and are totally unprepared for life on their own in Brisbane. They are all keen to learn our culture and our ways, but they receive absolutely no help from an uncaring federal government. A number of them feel lost and alone, but I have to say that initially their common bond has been the time that they have spent at the Milpera State High School in Chelmer learning English.

I was approached a number of months ago by a new member of our community, Camilla Cowley, who suggested that, as the state member, I could provide some assistance to a group of 15 to 25 year old Hazara ethnic group soccer-playing boys. It gives them an opportunity to learn sport and teamwork. Most importantly, it has given these boys an opportunity to enjoy life again.

So far, there has been an outpouring of community support, and I would like to thank the Western Suburbs Community and Sporting Club, Neil Urquhart and his team, who have provided a ground for the boys to play; the Ecumenical Social Justice Group, Val Whitehead and Karin Chai for collecting soccer boots; Video 2000 in Graceville and, of course, Milpera. The Tiger 11—the name they have taken on—will play in maroon colours for Queensland and out of respect for Wests. Coach Hassan and his assistant coach, Zelfequar Ali, I think will have the boys in great shape for a competition this September.

But I would like to make a request of the many people in Queensland whom I know read *Hansard*. We still need some more soccer boots for the boys. They do not get a lot of money from the federal government, and many of them are still growing and they cannot afford to keep buying new boots. I suggest that if there is anyone in our community who has some old or even new soccer boots, I would be very happy if they would send them to the Tiger 11 care of my office at 36 Station Road, Indooroopilly, 4068.
