




Speech by  
**Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

Hansard Wednesday, 6 April 2011

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## **YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.44 am): I am very happy to inform the House that the Bligh government has committed funding to the YMCA of over \$46,000 per annum over three years to continue to run the very successful Queensland Youth Parliament Program. I would like to congratulate the state council of the YMCA, located in my electorate of Brisbane Central, which conducts the Queensland Youth Parliament in a professional, efficient and informative manner. I believe that anyone who has attended any part of the sittings of the youth parliament would agree that the organisation of the event is outstanding and that it is run with immense professionalism and enjoyment of the youth members.

The program provides a forum for young people to debate a number of regional and state-wide policy and legislative issues and to advocate for change on youth and other issues through a simulation of the Queensland parliamentary process. To demonstrate the often progressive policy decisions that are debated during the program, in 2010 the participants resolved through parliamentary debate that future youth parliaments have four seats available for Indigenous participants. I commend them on this initiative. Over the last few years 20 to 25 per cent of the participants have been from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in an attempt to reflect the community they represent. The inclusion of the four additional parliamentary seats for young people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent is an admirable policy decision that allows better representation in the youth parliament, something that maybe all parliamentarians should take into consideration.

The program is held in such high regard that accreditation has been obtained with the Queensland Studies Authority which allows young people in years 11 and 12 participating in the youth parliament to receive one credit point towards their Senior Certificate of Education upon completion. This is a great program. It is run by young people for young people. It provides an important link for youth to influence government and the program is a fantastic opportunity for participants to improve their confidence. Maybe it could lead to a political career, as it did for current minister Kate Jones and the member for Beaudesert, who participated in the 1996 inaugural youth parliament as Premier and opposition leader respectively. Anything can happen. I congratulate Tom Fardoulys for being nominated as the 2011 Brisbane Central youth member and wish the program all the best for 2011.