




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Cycling in Taiwan

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (2.45 pm): This time last year I was getting ready to fly to Taiwan and ride with a Rotary group 1,000 kilometres around Taiwan, leaving from Taipei. I was accompanied by my good mate, Stanley Hsu, whose mum and dad live in Taipei. Taiwan is a very busy place so attempting to ride around it presented its challenges. I rode 680 kilometres before my legs refused to cooperate with me and I had to take the bus. I got to see a lot of Taiwan, both cities and countryside, from seaside to countryside, from rice fields to city congestion. I also got to meet many wonderful people along the way. The food was spectacular and there was also heaps of it. The Taiwanese know how to look after you. Whilst I was riding an average of 100 kilometres per day, I do not believe I managed to lose any weight.

When in Taiwan, I was looked after on the first night by Jason and his wife, Carol, and their two daughters, Sofia and Emily. I was touched by Jason and Carol's story. In about 2006 they applied for a working holiday visa to work and travel around Australia. They came to Australia to work and at the same time recharge their batteries or have a gap year. Their first job was working on a tomato farm north of Melbourne. Although they only stayed three weeks before moving on to Sydney, they say they learnt one hundred ways to cook tomatoes. They told me that farming was not easy, having to start at 5 am and finish at 4 pm with two tea breaks a day.

On arriving in Sydney, their second job was at the Royal Easter Show, where Jason worked on the twisted chips stall and Carol on the Chinese food store. Carol was amazed at how popular sweet and sour chicken was. They commented that this was their first opportunity to see Australians at play and they said how happy and fun everyone was. The next job—or third job as Jason and Carol called it—was for five months, with Carol getting an office job working at 20th Century Fox and Jason getting a job at LG. They enjoyed the hours but were amazed that at 20th Century Fox Carol's Irish boss would yell at her to go home if she stayed after four. Carol said that this was unheard of in Taiwan. She also enjoyed the free milk in the fridge; that was a big hit.

The next part of their trip entailed them travelling 10,082 kilometres after buying a second-hand car in Melbourne. They set off travelling through Sydney, Brisbane and Cairns and many Queensland towns in between. They then headed west to Darwin where they went to Kakadu, then through Central Australia via Alice Springs to Adelaide and then back to Melbourne and home to Taiwan. The cultural difference that Carol and Jason found was they felt Aussies were more concerned about what they did on weekends than what they did during the week. Back in Taiwan, Jason and Carol run an engineering firm.