House of Representatives

Proof

Constituency Statements

Australian Institute for Innovative Materials

Speech

Tuesday, 21 June 2011

By authority of the House of Representatives
Ms BIRD (Cunningham) (16:28): I visited the Australian Institute for Innovative Materials facility on 9 June with Parliamentary Secretary Justine Elliot and member for Throsby Stephen Jones. The University of Wollongong, which is the facility that runs AIIM, is a recognised world leader in multifunctional materials research, and I had the opportunity to find out more about the groundbreaking research being led by Professor Gordon Wallace and Professor Dou. The research groups housed at the AIIM—the ARC Centre for Excellence for Electromaterials Science and the Institute for Superconducting and Electronic Materials—together have more than 200 researchers and postgraduate students working to tackle some of the biggest global challenges. This includes energy technology that is developing new methods of energy generation, transportation and storage, including battery technologies that will be of considerable importance to the future of electric vehicles, and building on the breakthrough research they have done. Secondly, there is health and medical bionics to advance muscle and nerve regeneration and cochlear implants and to develop wearable bionics to assist with injury prevention and rehabilitation, as well as advances in medical devices such as improved MRI systems. Thirdly, there are innovative materials and manufacturing. There is some amazing 3-D printing technology and rapid prototyping systems and there is the development of materials to help lower costs and prove the efficiency of mechanical and electrical equipment. This facility continues to grow with the support from the Gillard government. We have invested $43 million in the future of the facility to create the first materials research facility to bridge the gap between lab based research and commercial applications. The expanded facility will now be able to undertake groundbreaking research and help turn those research breakthroughs into reality. It is a state-of-the-art facility, housing internationally recognised researchers who, from their Wollongong base, have established strong collaborative research and industry partnerships that give them a global reach. It is once again an example of the Wollongong area leading the nation and the world in important research and in new technology development for the future of the nation.