



Speech by

**Mrs J. GAMIN**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

---

Hansard 25 November 1999

### **ANZAC DAY AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mrs GAMIN** (Burleigh—NPA) (11.57 a.m.): This Bill deals with an amendment to the Anzac Day Act to introduce changes to the funding arrangements of the Anzac Day Trust Fund. That trust administers the collection and disbursement of funds for the general welfare of ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen, their dependents and related associations. As the member for Toowoomba North said, the major source of funding for the Anzac Day Trust Fund comes from a portion of various taxes collected each year, which include liquor licence fees and taxes in relation to race betting on Anzac Day. Some of those provisions are no longer appropriate and can vary from year to year as time and circumstances dictate. The purpose of this amendment Bill is to put in place an annual grant from Treasury set up as \$795,000 for the 1998-99 year and thereafter indexed by CPI. The arrangement has been approved by the trustees of the Anzac Day Trust and organisations that are associated with the trust, such as the RSL, Legacy and other organisations and associations of ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen.

I am indebted to the Burleigh RSL President, Ken McNaught, for the notes that he sent me on the history of the Burleigh Heads sub-branch, which was 60 years old on 13 January this year. I am now quoting freely from a recent RSL newsletter. The Burleigh Heads sub-branch was formed by a handful of World War I veterans in 1938 and received its charter a year later in January 1939. That was a courageous move considering the dark clouds of war forming over Europe again. Until the 1950s, the members met at the old Burleigh Heads Hotel on the esplanade but were always on the lookout for a home base of their own. Under the presidency of Kevin Snee, the State Government of the day granted permission for the RSL to build a hall on the site where it stands today. They worked hard at fundraising events and chook raffles and the hall was completed in 1954. Past patron Percy Brown turned the first sod for the hall's foundations. Percy passed away in 1997. His wife Ruby is an active member of the ladies auxiliary.

In the 1950s and the 1960s, the RSL hall was the hub of social activities in the local district, and today still provides an excellent venue for many local community organisations and is used every day of the week. The sub-branch offers a range of activities to those members of the veteran community who are socially isolated because of widowhood, lifestyle, health or disability. The sub-branch provides a safe and welcoming environment where members can get together as a veteran community without the distractions of the bigger facilities.

The committee has worked hard to renovate the old wooden hall which, last year, was painted inside and out, the floor was sanded and estapoled, and it all looks pretty good. Recently, the sub-branch received a very welcome grant under the Department of Veteran Affairs Joint Ventures scheme, and this was put towards a new public address system.

The sub-branch has survived for 60 years through many adversities including, at times, lack of membership. This is not a problem today as membership stands at 66, which is the highest in the sub-branch's history.

The RSL hall at Burleigh Heads is a noted feature as one enters the township from the north along the southbound Gold Coast Highway. On the corner of Sixth Avenue and the highway is the site of an old Aboriginal bora ring. This area has been grassed and fenced and left alone, and so this large grassy area is quite a sight from the busy highway. A big basalt boulder was brought down from

Tamborine, installed at the edge of the grassed area of the bora ring and dedicated to the memory of Aboriginal servicemen and women who have served in our armed forces.

On 11 November, we commemorated Armistice Day. RSL personnel in the Burleigh electorate—as in cities and towns throughout the nation—were engaged in solemn remembrance of the signing of the armistice which ended the First World War and in remembrance of their comrades who have served—and many have fallen—in theatres of war all over the world.

In Burleigh Heads, the 11 a.m. ceremony was held at the cenotaph or war memorial in Memorial Park and was then adjourned to the RSL hall in Sixth Avenue. The construction of the war memorial was a major project for the sub-branch and the Gold Coast City Council after Councillor Paul Gamin was successful in allocating the necessary funding when the expected Commonwealth grant from the Australia Remembers project was not forthcoming. The sub-branch had confidently expected to be included in Australia Remembers and had put a great deal of planning into an appropriate cenotaph instead of the simple grassy mound where ceremonies had been held in the past.

The lack of Commonwealth funding was certainly disappointing but, thanks to Councillor Gamin's efforts and the hard work of the sub-branch, the final result is a simple and moving monument which is very appropriate to the very attractive memorial park at Burleigh Heads. Paul has given great support and assistance to the RSL over many years now. For every Anzac Day, and other important occasions in Memorial Park, he has ensured that seating is provided, shaded areas are constructed and a sound system is installed. The RSL expressed its appreciation to Paul by awarding him honorary life membership of the Burleigh Heads sub-branch and appointing him as its patron. This is a signal honour for one who is not himself a returned serviceman.

We have been attending Anzac Day and other important ceremonies for a good many years. Our children used to march on Anzac Day with their school contingents. Paul, our Federal member and I are always honoured and privileged to be asked to share the reading of the resolutions during the morning ceremony. Mostly, the guest speakers for the ceremony come from the Land Warfare Centre at Canungra. I have heard some very moving addresses from those senior officers— excellent speakers, all of them. Until this year, Canungra used to provide the catafalque party as well. There is no doubt that, over the years, attendance at Anzac Day ceremonies in Burleigh Heads has increased in leaps and bounds—both at the dawn service and at the march later in the morning.

Legacy is another organisation mentioned in the Minister's second-reading speech. It is one of the organisations represented by the board of trustees of the Anzac Day Trust. Legacy cares for the widows and children of servicemen who have either lost their lives in service to our country or who have since passed on. I have often had occasion to be grateful to Legacy officers for the care they take of elderly widows and Legacy wards and for the manner in which they solve problems for these constituents.

The Legacy annual fundraising appeal includes a doorknock of local businesses in the Burleigh area. I am always very pleased to make space available in my electorate office as a base for Ben Schuster and his team of collectors to count the money and prepare the banking.

The RSL, Legacy and many other registered or incorporated organisations and associations are keeping alive the fine traditions set for this country by the dedication of all those men and women who served in our armed forces in many theatres of war, many of whom gave their lives for their country. I pay tribute to them all. I welcome this amendment to the Anzac Day Act 1995 because it confirms the Government's recognition and commitment to the Anzac Day tradition and the important activities of the Anzac Day Trust.

---