



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Hansard 2 May 2001

ANZAC DAY

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (7.16 p.m.): The day 25 April 2001 was certainly one to be remembered. With record crowds at all of the services it was proof of the importance of Anzac Day to all Australians.

In my own electorate of Mount Ommaney I attended three services. The dawn service at the Kokoda Stone at Corinda was real evidence that the enthusiasm for our war heroes is increasing. Over 400 people marched on that morning, while hundreds more looked on. I was proud to participate in the march with our returned soldiers. These individuals are becoming more and more precious. Look into the future 20 years on; will we still be commemorating Anzac Day when they are gone? Yes, I think the tradition will be carried on by our youth and the families of ex-servicemen and women.

At 8 a.m. I was honoured to be part of the official ceremony to unveil the new Centenary war memorial. Locals have waited eight years for this memorial to be constructed in the heart of the Centenary suburbs. Things started to happen two years ago despite the odds against us. As in wartime, people came together, and during the past few months leading up to Anzac Day we realised the dream.

I thank the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing for his assistance in this matter by providing a practical solution to the issue. Q-Build stonemasons were commissioned to carve the stone and the result was simple but magnificent. The Centenary War Memorial Gardens committee led by Don Robinson, the newly formed RSL and local businesses including Western Suburbs Landscaping ensured that the stone had appropriate surroundings for the day of commemoration.

The short half-hour ceremony was absolutely inspiring. This was due to the presence of some 50 members of the new Centenary Suburbs RSL sub-branch and about 250 spectators. The returned soldiers looked resplendent and proud to be there at a local ceremony dedicated to their efforts in valour.

At 10.30 a.m. ex-servicemen and women and their families marched to Oxley Memorial Place to hear an address by Cadet Under Officer Steven Hunt. This ceremony was also well received and supported by the local community.

Prior to Anzac Day several schools in the electorate of Mount Ommaney held special events commemorating Anzac Day. Corinda State High School, Middle Park State School and Corinda State Primary School invited guests from the armed services to honour the men and women who served our country during all the wars. It is important for children to appreciate our history in order to know the sacrifices made so that we can live in relative peace in the future.

The fall-out of wartime still continues, with families indirectly suffering the trauma of past war and killing. I believe that all veterans of war have been scarred psychologically to some extent, but some of the worst to suffer are the Vietnam veterans and their families. There are many who have difficulty adjusting to normal life, with nightmares of war recurring. Families, particularly wives, want to support them but have no support themselves. It is time that the federal government made up for the difficulties which have been endured over the years.

Time expired.
