



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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ANZAC ATATURK COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE; VIETNAM VETERANS

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (12.06 p.m.): I wish to draw to the attention of the House two very significant events which occurred in Southport recently. The first, on 14 July, was the unveiling of a plaque known as the Anzac Ataturk Commemorative Plaque at the Southport RSL club. I was privileged to represent the Premier at this event, which was a joint project between the Southport RSL and the Turkish Youth Association. It was an opportunity to again commemorate the dedication, courage and sacrifice of our Anzacs and also of the Turks. The gift of this plaque by the Turkish Youth Association to the Southport RSL sub-branch provided an opportunity to strengthen the friendship between the Australian and Turkish communities.

The Premier was at Anzac Cove earlier this year to take part in the commemorative services and described it as an extremely moving experience, not only because of the number of Australians who had made the pilgrimage but also because of the number of Turks who had paid their respects to Australian and New Zealand fallen soldiers. Two of my own children have made that pilgrimage and they speak of the event as awe-inspiring. One thing that struck them was the age of the soldiers who are buried there. My children at that time were only in their early 20s, but so many of the Anzacs were younger than they were at the time they made that ultimate sacrifice. A generation of Australians, New Zealanders and Turks lost an ill-conceived, ill-planned and ultimately ill-fated campaign.

It is significant that this contribution to the memory of our Anzacs should come from a youth group, for it is Australia's youth that will ensure that the Anzac spirit lives on. Particular thanks must go to Mehmet Evin, the president of the Turkish Youth Association, Turgut Allahmanli, the honorary consul for the Republic of Turkey, and Niyazi Adali, the consul general of the Republic of Turkey. Peta-Kaye Croft, the member for Broadwater, and Gold Coast mayor Gary Baidon also attended, as did Andrea Stolarchuk, the 2001 Simpson Prize essay winner. As the commander of the Turkish forces at Gallipoli so aptly put it, 'Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. Having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well.'

Certainly the sons and daughters of Turkey are well represented in Australia by the Turkish Youth Association. It was a time to reflect on the adversity the Anzacs faced more than 86 years ago when they landed on the fatal shores at Gallipoli. The spirit of the Anzacs is a legend so proud and steeped in history that it encompasses all Australians, regardless of their cultural background.

The second matter I wish to draw to the attention of the House also has a military flavour. It occurred at Southport last Sunday. That was the parade of national servicemen from all over Australia and from overseas. This parade was part of the celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the introduction of national service. I was honoured to again represent the Premier, and at the parade the salute was taken by Lieutenant-General Peter Cosgrove, the chief of the Australian Army.

A total of 287,000 men were conscripted between 1951 and 1959 and between 1962 and 1972. Despite eventual acceptance of the Vietnam veterans march in 1987, the contribution of national servicemen to Australia's defence effort remained largely unrecognised both by the community and the Commonwealth government. I remember the ballot in 1966, and I prayed hard that my birth date would not be pulled out. Fortunately, it was not. But many of my friends were not so lucky.

Many national servicemen were not properly advised of their entitlements on discharge from the services, and in 1987 the National Servicemen's Association was formed in Toowoomba by Barry Vicary to try to address these injustices. Unfortunately, after starting the organisation and tirelessly working to

get it running efficiently, Barry's untimely death in 1991 prevented him from seeing his hopes for the organisation fully realised. He would have been proud of the parade, which completed a week of celebration and comradeship on the Gold Coast.

Credit for the day must go to the president of the National Servicemens Association, Earl Jennings, and his committee for organising this wonderful reunion. There were approximately 3,700 nashos who took part in the reunion

Time expired.
