



Speech by

BONNY BARRY

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Hansard 3 September 2002

HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN WORKING WOMEN'S PROJECT

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (7.24 p.m.): It is always difficult to follow the member for Logan, but—

I will sing you a song of the *Unsung heroes*
The mothers, the daughters, the wives
The working women who built this land
It's the story of their lives
The hand on the plough was the hand on the cradle
And the hand that wore the glove
Was the hand of the nurse and the hand of the teacher
Was the hand of the labours of love
They studied, they worked the fields and the factories
They did the work that was meant for men
And when they got back to their homes and their children
They started all over again
So we recall their stories some all but forgotten
And we thank them for singing our song
And paving the way for the next generation
Of women to stand proud and strong.

The lyrics of the song *Unsung heroes* that I have just read to the House were written by an amazing artist called Sue Wighton, who wrote the song especially to accompany a documentary that forms part of the history of the Australian Working Women's Project. Sue Wighton performed the song for the first time at the opening ceremony of stage one of the Working Women's Project—a project that was opened in July in Barcaldine by the Premier, which pays tribute to the work and the contribution of Australian working women and is part of a \$7.5 million commitment to redress the unacceptable oversight in our history books about the contributions that have been made by the working women of this country.

Mr Terry Sullivan interjected.

Ms BARRY: I had the great privilege of attending the opening, as the member for Stafford said, with a number of honourable members and it would surprise few in this House that my affinity with the fine town of Barcaldine, and in particular the Australian Workers Heritage Centre, is shared by many of them.

To be part of the opening of a project that ensures that her story—the story of working women of this country—is celebrated, recorded and remembered made my visit there particularly special. Along with two of my favourite working women, Sue Smith and Rosemary Hume, we drove up from Brisbane and were greeted by the friendly faces of the people from Barcaldine. We were joined by great Labor women such as Joan Kirner, Margaret Whitlam and Shirley Mellor just to name a few; hundreds of grey nomads; lots of locals; women; their families and their friends. The celebration was loud, proud, warm and welcoming. City met bush, women met women. Local community organisations treated us to old-fashioned hospitality. Women orators did battle on an old-fashioned soapbox. Women from the city and the bush talked about their hopes and their dreams. Pat Ogden's Globe Hotel rocked to the sounds of great entertainment and some appallingly bad singing from some well-known public figures, who are best to go unnamed. It was a celebration that was immense fun and filled me with incredible pride. Can I say that it confirmed to me that her story of women, past present and future, is in great hands at the Australian Workers Heritage Centre in the town of Barcaldine.

I would like to thank Bob Gleeson, the CEO of the Australian Workers Heritage Centre—and an Aspley constituent—and his team. To Pat Ogden, his family, to Russell, Tony and Col, I want to say thank you for your hospitality. I would also like to say thank you to the Premier and in particular to the Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Matt Foley, whose singing is always excellent, for the multimillion dollar state government support of the vision to celebrate and record the extraordinary efforts of Australian working women.