



Speech by

Mike Horan

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

Hansard Wednesday, 16 June 2004

VIETNAM VETERANS SUBCOMMITTEE, TOOWOOMBA RSL SUB-BRANCH

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (6.28 p.m.): Tonight I want to speak about a wonderful effort and move in Toowoomba by the Vietnam Veterans Subcommittee of the Toowoomba RSL sub-branch to put in place a Vietnam War memorial in the beautiful Mothers Memorial Gardens located on the banks of East Creek in Toowoomba. They have already applied for a grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs under the auspices of the program Their Service, Our Heritage. They are looking forward and hoping to get under the terms of the funding an amount of \$4,000.

I am speaking in parliament tonight to ask the Queensland government and the Premier to provide an equivalent amount of \$4,000 to the Vietnam Veterans Subcommittee to enable them to realise their dream of putting in place a monument. Do you think you could keep them quiet, Mr Speaker? This is pretty important.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Terry Sullivan: Why don't you get some of your own members here to listen? They all run away.

Mr HORAN: Pull your head in! This is a very important matter about a Vietnam memorial and it deserves respect. I thought the member opposite would be decent but I do not think he knows much about decency.

During the past eight months the Vietnam veterans have had a process of consultation with a community based committee made up of veterans, veterans widows, youth and other interested parties. They have created a design for the memorial using the talents of local sculptors and artists, and they have raised about \$20,000 already towards the estimated cost of \$60,000—all by their own efforts. The site has been provided free of cost by the Toowoomba City Council and the commitment of the Toowoomba City Council has been secured for the ongoing upkeep of the memorial.

They have been provided with sizeable personal donations from many members of our local community.

They have also conducted group presentations to local area commanders of the Australian Defence Force bases and the Singaporean air force detachment and have received support of a practical and a moral nature from both. They have also been granted the wonderful honour of having the memorial, when constructed, dedicated by Mr Keith Payne VC, who was guest of honour during Anzac Day in Toowoomba this year at the dawn services at the Drayton service and at the Mothers Memorial service.

Local contractors will be utilised in the construction work wherever possible. The design is going to be quite exceptional, with navy stele to the left and army stele to the front and air force stele to the right. There will be a circular pond in front, with water feeding to the top of each stele and then returning to the pond via channels. Around the ponds in what will be a first for Australia will be an acknowledgment of the service provided by various civilian groups in Vietnam—approximately 1,400 served of whom six were killed.

This will be a wonderful memorial to those men and women who served in Vietnam, to those who have sacrificed their lives to provide peace in south-east Asia and peace for our Australian nation. I am asking the Premier if he would give every consideration to this very modest amount of \$4,000 to enable this memorial to be put in place.