



Speech by

Neil Roberts

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Hansard Thursday, 30 September 2004

BANYO RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE

Mr NEIL ROBERTS (Nudgee—ALP) (6.14 p.m.): I want to recognise the community initiatives and achievements of the Banyo sub-branch of the Returned and Services League. Like many RSL sub-branches, just a few short years ago the Banyo branch had difficulty maintaining its numbers and, with ageing members, finding the time and energy to sustain the organisation. A helpful turning point occurred in 1995 with the then Labor government's Australia Remembers initiative. Interest in the sacrifices of our service men and women grew as a result of a massive campaign of activities, award ceremonies and information distribution to communities and schools. One pleasing result of the Australia Remembers campaign was the increasing number of people, particularly young people, who were attending Anzac Day services. Around this time the Banyo sub-branch also began to actively encourage new members and to put in place initiatives to work more closely with the local community and local schools in keeping the memory of servicemen and women alive.

Mr Reeves interjected.

Mr NEIL ROBERTS: Yes, Con Sciacca did a great job on that campaign. A number of initiatives are worthy of note. In 2000 the sub-branch established Australia's first RSL citizens auxiliary which enables members of the local community who are not directly eligible for RSL membership to participate in their affairs. The citizens auxiliary concept has now received support from the national level of the RSL and is considered to be a key plank in the league's endeavours to sustain sub-branches into the future. Another exciting initiative of the Banyo sub-branch is its annual expo on the enjoyment of ageing. The expo has been staged for the last two years at the Australian Catholic University at Banyo. This year ACU staged the expo in partnership with the sub-branch and discussions are currently under way with Centro management at Taigum to stage next year's expo at the shopping centre.

The expo attracts hundreds of visitors who receive information from a wide range of service providers and support agencies who deal with seniors in our community. Greenslopes Private Hospital has been the major sponsor for the first two expos and it has been opened in each of its first two years by the then Minister for Families, Judy Spence, and the Minister for Communities, Warren Pitt, respectively. One of the main achievements of the sub-branch is the support it provides to the families of its members and fallen comrades. It also hosts the annual Anzac Day ceremony for Banyo and surrounding suburbs at the recently refurbished Banyo memorial. It is now not unusual to have crowds in excess of 500 people at this service.

The Banyo sub-branch of the RSL has been a leader in innovative ways of engaging with its local community. It has been recognised nationally for its efforts, and I want to publicly thank and congratulate it and the citizens auxiliary for the wonderful work they do in our local community. I want to record the names of the current executive of the sub-branch and the citizens auxiliary as a part of this public recognition of their efforts. In the sub-branch they are president Ron Virgen and committee members John Sutton, Frank Banks, Anne Templeton, Jim Comerford, Dave Townsend, Bob Hadlow, Bruce Meiklejohn and Bob Rogers and in the citizens auxiliary they are president Sue Edwards and other committee members David Black, Sharon Ormiston, Maureen Sargent, Millis Townsend, Cameron Ormiston, James Templeton and Elizabeth Nunn.