



Speech by

Pat Purcell

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Wednesday, 5 September 2007

LATHAM, MR L

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (9.42 pm): Tonight I would like to speak about a good friend of mine, Laurie Latham, who is also a constituent of my electorate of Bulimba. Members who attended the parliamentary prayer fellowship breakfast would have met Laurie and would know what a lovely gentleman he is. Earlier this year Laurie celebrated his 87th birthday and he still continues to work hard for the community in a voluntary capacity in his role as president of the Morningside Meals on Wheels.

In his working career Laurie was employed in the Government Printing Office from 1940 until his retirement in 1980. During this time he was a member of the executive committee and twice served as the father of the chapel. From 1954 to 1962, Laurie was the secretary of the Morningside State School P&C Association. A school committee meeting in 1958 endorsed the proposition that a swimming pool should be built at the school. The cost of the pool was 14,000 pounds, with the P&C to raise half the funding.

Although Laurie's children no longer attended the school, Laurie continued to serve as secretary until the completion of the project. The official opening of the pool took place on 10 March 1962. Laurie served as vice-president of the Balmoral State High School P&C Association from 1957 to 1961. During the 1950s Laurie was also secretary of the Bulimba and District Progress Association. In the 1970s he taught English to migrants on a voluntary basis.

In 1980 Laurie started as a volunteer at the Balmoral Uniting Community Centre in Morningside. In 1971 he was appointed assistant administrator before becoming the administrator of the centre in 1993, which was a position he held until only a few years ago. He was also the parish secretary of the Balmoral Uniting Church. Laurie was also one of the sponsors of the Family Day Care Centre located next door to the centre. Sadly, the day care building burnt down in 2000 but it has since been rebuilt, bigger and better than ever before, by Laurie and his committee. In his position of sponsor, Laurie was involved in many meetings and conferences and kept abreast of legal and government policies regarding the care of children.

Also during Laurie's time as administrator the centre was renovated to such an extent that it looked like a new building. Laurie oversaw all the work and liaised with the tradesmen, architects, suppliers and the church during this time. Naturally, this was a very stressful experience for Laurie, but he coped with all the stress in his usual manner of quietly persisting and getting the job done.

Laurie Latham has given over 50 years of voluntary service to our local community. At 87 he is certainly at an age when he could be relaxing and enjoying time with his family instead of continuing to work voluntarily for his community, but that is not Laurie's way. His dedication, care and love for his fellow man is boundless and he is certainly an inspiration to us all. Laurie, may you live forever.