



Speech by

Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Thursday, 14 February 2008

RILEY, MRS G

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (5.59 pm): Today is a sad day. Today the Inala community came together to honour Gert Riley—local historian, local identity, local legend. Gert passed away last week at the age of 85. She was born in Liverpool and moved with her husband to Australia and settled in Inala. She lived in Inala for over 50 years. I have never met anyone more proud of our suburb Inala.

Gert witnessed the transformation of Inala. I recall that Gert lived on Tamarind Street, which was the main thoroughfare into Inala and one of our busiest roads. With the upgrade of Progress Road, her street was closed off. I remember saying to Gert how good it was for her to no longer have the traffic and the constant noise. 'Oh, no,' she said, 'I simply can't sleep at night anymore. It's far too quiet. I liked it just the way it was.'

Gert was instrumental in setting up the Inala and Richlands District Historical Society, of which she was a lifelong member, and published several books: *Inala—Our Suburb*, *History of Inala and Suburbs*, *Inala—and proud of it*. Gert Riley was indeed proud of her suburb and was a regular contributor to 4BC when issues dealing with Inala were raised. I first met Gert in my early twenties, and she would regularly drop into the federal member's office discussing local issues and her latest research. She was a passionate member of the Australian Labor Party. She was awarded the Premier's Award for Seniors and she was recognised by the lord mayor. She was a tireless volunteer for the community. However, it was the next award that would be her most cherished.

In June last year the Inala community, friends and family gathered to honour Gert's commitment to Inala by naming the Department of Housing units after her. These units at Ash Street were named Gert Riley Place, a living memory of Gert's contribution and passion for the Inala community. She said to me that by far this was her greatest honour, and I thank the honourable minister, the Hon. Robert Swarten, for approving my recommendation in naming the units after her.

I also found out on that day that my childhood friend Jenny Moran was in fact Gert Riley's granddaughter, and over the last few years my grandmother Beryl and Gert also became friends. They had a fondness for a cuppa, a fondness for a chat and a fondness for the pokies. Gert was a member of the Inala Blue Fin Fishing Club and would go there each day to have her hot meal. This afternoon this is where hundreds of people are gathering to pay their last respects.

Many people knew of Gert's commitment to the community but many of us were surprised at her extracurricular activity. On Sundays Gert would go to the Forest Lake Lodge to entertain, singing to whom she called 'the oldies' when in fact most of the residents were younger than her. She felt very sad that many people who lived at the lodge were so lonely with no family living close by. She brought a lot of happiness to others, putting their needs above her own. Inala is the Aboriginal word meaning 'resting place'. Gert, may I say to you, 'Rest in peace. Inala will miss you. God bless you.'