




Speech by
Carl Judge

MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY

Hansard Thursday, 1 November 2012

RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE; VETERANS

 **Mr JUDGE** (Yeerongpilly—LNP) (3.30 pm): I rise to speak on a matter raised with me by members of the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch within the electorate of Yeerongpilly. I point out that the RSL is an apolitical organisation that provides vital services not only to veterans and their families but also to the increasing number of currently serving ADF personnel, both male and female. I praise the dedication of the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch, including for the work it does to promote the interests and welfare of ADF members, former and serving. Its efforts extend to supporting ADF members' dependants living in the district. Very importantly, the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch does a great job in providing trained officers in advocacy and welfare to assist ADF members, past and present, including their relatives.

As this is the last sitting day before Remembrance Day, it is an appropriate time to reinforce the importance of politicians respecting the work of the RSL and supporting the interests and welfare of our ADF members, past and present. Relevant to Remembrance Day, I wish to express my respect for the work of the RSL's Queensland branch and particularly praise the Yeronga Dutton Park sub-branch members for their untiring efforts in my electorate. I genuinely respect their commitment to preserving the memory and the records of those who have suffered and died in the service of the Commonwealth of Australia. It is only right that, as politicians, we recognise and truly comprehend the sacrifices that all our troops and their families have made throughout the decades to protect and maintain the lifestyle that we enjoy in Australia.

It is equally important that, as elected representatives, we always work to ensure that governments accept and fulfil their responsibilities to our veterans and serving ADF members and their families, especially at a federal level. On this point, I highlight that the fundamental mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs is to support those who serve or have served in defence of our nation and commemorate their service and sacrifice. I also point out that it is not sufficient for politicians to take every opportunity to be photographed, for example on Remembrance Day, with our troops and not diligently offer them every financial and human services support as required. As politicians, we have an ongoing obligation to our ADF members and their families, especially in terms of providing them with much needed support. This applies, in particular, to federal politicians who are responsible for administering and funding the Department of Veterans Affairs.

During a recent event in my local area, a loyal member of the Yeronga Dutton Park RSL Sub-Branch informed me that it has been estimated that for every death up to four service personnel have been wounded. I comprehend the loss suffered by families and the mental and physical scars the wounded will carry for the rest of their lives. I will always support the local RSL.