




Speech by

Michael Latter

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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BLOOD DONATION

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (3.57 pm): I am somewhat pleased and a little disappointed in myself to be talking about the topic I am today. Last Friday my office staff booked me in to give blood at a mobile blood van. When they first asked me if I would give blood, I told them, 'Absolutely, of course I will give blood. Why wouldn't I?' So they booked me in. When I went down there I was rather ashamed to find out that it was six years since I had last given blood. I think that just demonstrates that for some of us time and life just gets in the way of things. We lose track of what is going on and sometimes what is important.

Let me tell the House some of the fast facts around blood donation and why I think it is absolutely critical. One in three people will need blood in their lifetime but only one in 30 Australians donate. Every week Australia needs over 27,000 blood donations and every blood donation saves three lives. The life you save might be that of someone you love. People think the majority of donated blood helps those involved in accidents and emergencies. However, most of the blood is used to treat cancer patients, people undergoing surgery, pregnant women and unborn babies. They all require donated blood. There is no substitute for blood and it is needed every day. Most people are able to give blood if they are fit, healthy and not suffering from a cold, flu or other illness at the time.

I was also amazed by something else I have heard in the last couple of days—that there is a tremendous misconception out there that if you have a tattoo you cannot give blood. In fact, you can. But if you have a tattoo and you are concerned about this, contact the blood bank and the Red Cross and have a chat to them about it. In fact they love people who have tattoos because they are generally not scared to have needles. I was devastated to hear that winter is a particularly tough time for the Red Cross in terms of getting blood donations. The reason is that a lot of people have colds and flus at that time and it really creates quite a shortage.

So, honourable members, I implore you: if, like me, you have just forgotten or lost track of time, please take the opportunity and make the time now to get down there and donate blood. It is important. You never know, it could be one of your family members, one of your friends or one of your loved ones who may need it one day; in fact it may even be you. For something as honourable as this, I again implore and urge you to donate blood and help the Red Cross.