




Speech By
Peter Russo

MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK

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ADJOURNMENT

Wassenaar, Mr D

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (12.52 am): I rise to speak about a remarkable man in my electorate of Sunnybank in the suburb of Acacia Ridge. Mr Douwe Wassenaar celebrated his 100th birthday on May Day. He has lived in Australia since 1956. He was born in the Great War and survived two world wars and the Great Depression in his home country of Holland. He was one of 12 children, born in a tiny village in the Netherlands. His father was a sail maker. He recounted fond memories of living in the village on the riverfront and working around his dad's family business. He recounted how much fun he had working for his dad and reminisced about the pocket money he earned in the family business.

He also recounted to me fond memories of his childhood in Woadsend, where he would join with his friends and chase after the town crier and mimic his loud messages. Despite growing up during two world wars, he said that he was always free to explore the countryside. He would spend every day searching for birds' eggs. He said that he got to know all the local farmers. If he was lucky, he would get buttermilk from the farm workers.

His first real job, at the age of 15, was as a spray painter. Although he aspired to be a mechanic, he never achieved that dream. It was remarkable to talk to a 100-year-old gentleman who was reminiscing about a dream he had all those years ago. He studied mechanics for a while but continued to work as a spray painter for a living.

During the Second World War he married Marie. Ultimately, they moved to Australia, where they made a home. He ran a painting business and now lives in Acacia Ridge with his daughter. He had fond memories of his journey to Australia. He spoke about the trip on the ship via the Suez Canal, Fremantle, Melbourne and Sydney, ultimately arriving in Brisbane. Although the early days were a challenge, he has really enjoyed the freedom of this great country.