



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

---

Record of Proceedings, 3 May 2018

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Schy, Mrs B**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.04 pm): I rise today to praise an unsung hero in the Ipswich community: Mrs Beryl Schy, an amazing 90-year-old woman who announced last month that she will be stepping down as president of the Ipswich branch of the War Widows' Guild after 23 years of service. Beryl Schy is a quiet achiever with a generous community spirit who said she wanted to give something back to the War Widows' Guild in appreciation of all the support and help she received from them herself. Beryl turned to the Ipswich War Widows' after her husband, Frank Schy, a former Rat of Tobruk, died in 1983. She has been an active member since 1985 and took up the role of president in 1995, serving in the role for 23 years.

We should never forget the important role the War Widows' Guild of Australia played in helping to end the hardship and poverty many war widows and their families faced in this country after World War II. Soon after it was formed in 1945, the War Widows' Guild fought hard for decent pensions and better housing for war widows so that they would not have to struggle to keep a roof over their heads or feed their kids after their husbands died. They have also been there to provide essential support, counselling and companionship for war widows, and they were there for Beryl after her husband passed away in 1983.

The Ipswich War Widows' offered Beryl the opportunity to form lifelong friendships with other women in the group whose husbands had served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. The friendships are an important source of strength for the War Widows' organisation, and Beryl has expressed that it has been marvellous to feel that she is not alone and that she has an organisation behind her that is continually fighting for benefits for war widows.

Like many people who devote their lives to community service, Beryl has also been involved in numerous other community groups doing voluntary work for the Scouts, Legacy, Red Cross, Ipswich Hospice and Palliative Care Australia. She also worked in the Red Cross shop once a month at the St Andrew's hospital in Ipswich. She was involved in the Uniting Church's Friendship Circle every fortnight, participating in the Sunshine Fellowship's entertainment and activities for aged homes. In 2004 she was awarded three Centenary of Ipswich Medallions for her community service and, in the same year, was nominated for Citizen of the Year in the Australia Day Awards.

There are many women like Beryl in towns right across Queensland who are a driving force behind our community organisations—who put hours of dedication and commitment into organisations to keep them alive so that they can continue delivering vital support services to people in need. I am constantly amazed at the hard work and long hours that volunteers put in every day behind the scenes in order to keep these organisations running. In Beryl's own words, 'The strength of any organisation is in the number of its loyal members.'

Without dedicated members like Beryl Schy, organisations like War Widows' would not exist and many people in our communities would be all the poorer for it. I would like to thank Beryl for her 23 years of service as president of the Ipswich War Widows' and for her volunteer services to the Ipswich community, and I wish her the very best. I want to acknowledge Jenny Gregory, the Queensland state secretary of the War Widows' Guild, who is continuing that tradition.