




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Thornton, Mr J

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (7.22 pm): I rise tonight to say a few words about someone who was a champion to many but who never liked to make a fuss or be acknowledged for his efforts. This legend passed away recently and if numbers at a funeral are anything to go by I am not the only person who will sing Jimmy's praises. Jimmy Thornton was a giant of the electricity supply industry. I want to put on record his contribution to safety in the industry and in particular his legacy of what is now known as SAHVEA, an acronym for Safe Access to High Voltage Electrical Apparatus—the industry loves acronyms—or 'the orange book' as it was known in Jimmy's day.

In the early nineties, if my memory serves me correctly, in QEC, which is now Powerlink, there was an expression of interest to have a look at refreshing our high-voltage switching and access procedures and Jimmy, who was a leading hand and a long-term mentor for apprentices and younger tradespeople such as me, stood up. Little did he know that this would be the turning point in his career and one that would see him work hard in creating a safer environment for workers in the industry for the rest of his working life.

It goes without saying that the switching of voltages of up to 330 volts is a dangerous task and the intricacies of switching to create a safe, dead, earthed zone for maintenance and construction activities in a live switchyard is no mean feat. Having a safe system of work is vital and having a good one like SAHVEA is the reason the Queensland electrical supply industry's safety and system security is second to none.

Jimmy and his team took the redesign of our procedures seriously and although he was a little, gentle, polite guy he never took a backward step against not only the powers that be in QEC but he also brought Energex and Ergon along as well. That being said, management, workers and everyone wanted a safe system to work under, but getting agreement from all parties and egos was something Jimmy excelled at. Jimmy was always a proud ETU member and he wore his worker, trainer and ETU hats proudly to bring all players together.

The safer procedures were just the start. Developing consistent training and levels of qualification was the next body of work Jimmy and the team took on. This work is still ongoing as the industry and outage constraints continuously change. I know that many others have contributed to SAHVEA, and I was even a switching trainer for a while before I left Powerlink to be a member here, but you do not often meet someone like Jimmy who selflessly made a career out of creating a safer workplace for his and future generations and in doing so became a role model for most of us.

I have to say, in finishing, that Jimmy loved putting together a PowerPoint presentation and from time to time they could be a little bit boring. I do not know how long it went for, but the one he put together for his funeral gave him the last laugh as we all had to watch it without saying a word or interrupting with a question. RIP, old mate. You have left your mark.