



Speech By  
**Bart Mellish**


**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 25 February 2021

**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Anzac Day; Fall of Singapore, Commemoration**

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (2.11 pm): I was so pleased with the Premier's announcement earlier this week that Anzac Day is good to go in 2021. Queensland's Anzac Day commemorations will proceed as normal in 2021. The Premier asked me to look into this issue and we have managed to secure a great outcome for Queensland veterans and the wider community. We looked at a range of options—even looking at whether we could use stadiums in Brisbane and around the state—and what we have landed on, on the advice of the Chief Health Officer, is a great outcome—Anzac Day just like it is 2019. We are able to do this because of the fantastic work of Queenslanders in getting tested when they are feeling a bit crook and keeping up social distancing and scanning QR codes when they go in and out of pubs—all measures that we have had to live with over the last year or so.

Last year on Anzac Day there were over 270 active cases in Queensland. This year right at the moment there are fewer than 10 and there has been no community transmission for over a month. Victoria cannot do what we can and it is still unknown what New South Wales is doing, but two months out it is great that we can make this announcement. Outdoor events including dawn services, marches and later services will proceed without the need for check-in procedures. Indoor events such as at RSL clubs will require sign-ins as per normal. I sincerely thank Tony Ferris, RSL Queensland President—

**Mr Ryan** interjected.

**Mr MELLISH:** I take that interjection. I thank him and also RSL south-eastern subbranch president Kerry Gallagher for their dealings with me on this matter. As Tony said—

The RSL is overjoyed. The communities and our veterans will be able to step out with their comrades so a great day for Queensland.

Kerry Gallagher said—

Veterans get together one day a year and march down the streets of their town, the one they gave service to, and be able to catch up with their mates ...

I also commend Tony and RSL Queensland for their Light Up the Dawn initiative in 2020 which will continue. It was a great way for people to pay their respects at home, and I know plenty of members in the chamber did just that.

On a related matter, I recently had the real honour to be at the commemoration service for the 79th anniversary of the Fall of Singapore to Japan. Because of the sacrifice of those brave Australians who served in the Pacific War, we are able to enjoy the freedoms we do today. My own grandfather served in the 2nd/10th Field Regiment and was captured in Singapore and spent more than three years in Changi Prison and in atrocious conditions on the Burma Railway, so I was especially honoured to be able to lay a wreath on behalf of the state government for him, his fellow soldiers and their mates who did not make it home. Libby Parkinson, the event organiser, does a fantastic job every year. Her own father was captured in Singapore, and maybe he and my grandfather were mates or at least knew each other.

While I was there I had the chance to drop into the restored galleries at Anzac Square which really are fantastic if anyone has the chance to drop by. They are of course underneath the Shrine of Remembrance off to the side of one of the underground entries to Central station. There are great interactive exhibits with really helpful and knowledgeable staff. If anyone walks past every day on their way to work, they should do themselves a favour and drop in.