




Speech By
Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL 2021

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (12.27 pm): I rise to speak on the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. I also acknowledge the service of veterans on both sides of the chamber. I appreciate what they have done for our country. I also appreciate the Premier and the assistant minister in terms of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill. I reflect on the words of the member for Sandgate yesterday. I go for a walk every morning. This morning I walked through Anzac Square and reflected on his words about it being a significant spot. It is. When you walk through Anzac Square you think about the people who sacrificed their lives so that we can have the life we have today. My father served in the Catalinas during World War II and lost two brothers in that war. This bill is all about veterans and making sure that they are looked after.

The Palaszczuk government has respect for veterans. I refer to the Gallipoli to Armistice Memorial in Maryborough which the Palaszczuk government helped fund along with the federal government and the Fraser Coast Regional Council. I publicly thank Nancy Bates, Greig Bolderrow and Captain Jason Scanes, who is a very good friend of mine and a champion of a man. I will talk more about Jason shortly.

The Duncan Chapman Memorial in Maryborough was opened on 21 July 2018 by the Premier, then prime minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull and the Fraser Coast Mayor, George Seymour—and what an amazing tribute it is to our World War I diggers. When you walk through the memorial it sends shivers up your spine to think what the men went through in the battlefields of Gallipoli and France, and that is why the Palaszczuk government is very strongly committed to that. Another thing the Palaszczuk government has initiated is the employment pathway—that is, we are employing ex-veterans through the public sector in Queensland. That is a great initiative from this government to ensure that veterans get employment when they come out of the service.

Debate, on motion of Mr Saunders, adjourned.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (2.00 pm), continuing: I was talking about the great work the Palaszczuk government does with veterans, particularly in the Maryborough electorate. We have the Gallipoli to Armistice Memorial, known locally as the Duncan Chapman Memorial. We also have the Military Trail, which goes from Maryborough through to Hervey Bay, Toogoom, Howard and Tiaro. There are some interesting stories regarding our veterans in the area. The Military Trail, backed by the Palaszczuk government and the Fraser Coast Regional Council, has become a big tourist trail for the region—besides the whales at Hervey Bay and the manufacturing in Maryborough. We do get a lot of veterans who come through.

We have some really great RSL clubs: Maryborough, Tiaro, Burrum District at Howard and Toogoom. The Toogoom and District RSL club is what I call a traditional club. It is an old Vietnam shed that was found in crates and put together by a lot of the Vietnam veterans. It is a really good atmosphere.

They are doing great work in the community for the Vietnam veterans and also for the Afghan and Iraqi veterans. There is a lot happening with veterans particularly in the regional area of Maryborough. Thanks to the Palaszczuk Labor government, we have work for veterans in the Public Service.

I would like to talk about some very good friends of mine who are veterans. One in particular is a bloke called Jason Scanes. Jason and I are very good friends. Jason is one of the most principled men you will ever meet in your life. He is a tremendous person.

Mr Mellish: Hear, hear!

Mr SAUNDERS: I will take that interjection from the assistant minister, the member for Aspley. I know that they are quite good friends. Jason is a bloke from Forsaken Fighters Australia. He has done a lot just recently in terms of bringing interpreters to Australia, particularly his interpreter from Afghanistan. I know that it has been a very hard time for Jason. As I said, he is a very principled man and a man of his word. We think about Jason all the time and acknowledge the hard work he has done to bring the interpreters here. Also, he is talking to the Afghan soldiers back there all the time. Forsaken Fighters Australia is a very good group. Jason plays a major part in that. Craig Smith is another great friend of mine. I also mention Ricky Rowland. There are a lot of good veterans in our community and a lot of veterans on the Fraser Coast, particularly in the Maryborough-Hervey Bay area. They play a very important role in our community.

I acknowledge the veterans who have served our country. We can never pay them enough. One of the worries I have is that if the Indue card, which is the federal government card, comes in and if the Morrison government is re-elected all veterans will go on this Indue card. I am very concerned because we have seen what it has done to ordinary people but particularly to veterans who have issues. I think putting them on the Indue card is an absolute disgrace. We know that the bill has been passed by the federal government—they only have to pull the trigger on the legislation—and I am very concerned about what will happen to our veterans if the government does get re-elected and they put veterans on the Indue card.

I would like to thank the Premier and particularly the assistant minister. I have talked at length about this bill with the assistant minister, along with Jason Scanes and other veterans in my area. I thank the member for Aspley. I know that he has been in contact with a lot of members of my community about this bill and has worked very hard with my veteran community to make sure it has landed in the right spot. I thank the committee and I commend the bill to the House.