




Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**

**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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### **QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (5.47 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. This is a strong piece of legislation that will ultimately safeguard and preserve the history and memory of the men and women who have served in wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that the contributions of Queensland veterans are acknowledged and supported. When it comes to preserving the history and memory of service men and women it is important that we have the right mechanisms in place to continue their important legacy. I would like to acknowledge the Community Support and Services Committee, the chair, Corrine McMillan, members of the committee, committee secretariat and Hansard for their hard work in pulling this bill together.

During the consultation phase the Community Support and Services Committee invited written submissions from different subscribers, and 12 were received. The explanatory notes state that consultation on the options for the future governance of Anzac Square occurred at various times between 2017 and 2021. I acknowledge the Anzac Square Steering Committee, which was established to oversee the restoration project, the former Queensland Advisory Committee for the Commemoration of the Anzac Centenary—now ceased—the Queensland Veterans' Advisory Committee and Brisbane City Council, which were consulted during this time. I would also like to acknowledge and thank all those who took the time to contribute to this important legislative reform.

The objective of the bill is to establish the Queensland Veterans' Council as a statutory body. The QVC will have three key areas of responsibility: the trustee of Anzac Square under the Land Act 1994 and the ongoing management and operation of Anzac Square; the functions of the board of trustees under the Anzac Day Act 1959; and providing advice to government on veterans matters. Anzac Square in Brisbane is Queensland's pre-eminent war memorial and plays a significant role in commemorating the contribution of Australian armed forces, particularly the service of Queensland's men and women in overseas conflicts since the Boer War.

The committee conducted a site visit to Anzac Square on 28 May 2021. I was humbled by the opportunity to visit that day, as it was my first experience of visiting Anzac Square. It was such a wonderful experience. I recommend that anyone visiting Brisbane should visit Anzac Square and learn about our Anzacs. The committee was given a tour and got to see the completed four-stage restoration work that took place between 2014 and 2019. Part of the project included a major redevelopment of the undercroft to create the Anzac memorial galleries, which are modern gallery spaces fitted with digital technology that provide a platform for educational and interactive exhibitions. The memorial galleries allow Anzac Square to expand its original purpose to include education, which I think would be perfect for the young tech minds.

The educational and interactive exhibitions were incredible and are absolutely needed. There are decades and decades of documents, heirlooms and various items that need to be kept in a safe place. It was explained to us on the day that, because there are many visitors to Anzac Square, items are at risk of getting damaged in the handling process, so it is a must that we have technology in this space

so we can continue to preserve our most treasured history and the legacy of the men and women who fought so hard for us. The interactive exhibitions mean that visiting members of the public will be able to see three-dimensional images of items that are kept in archive to preserve history. It was wonderful to be able to see, feel and hear some of the recounts of history told through personal stories. I could never imagine what life must have been like for them, but visiting Anzac Square gave me the opportunity to learn and appreciate the vast legacy left for us.

The project cost \$21.98 million and was jointly funded by the Australian government, the Queensland government and the Brisbane City Council. Upon commencement, the bill would transfer the trusteeship and management of Anzac Square to QVC. QVC would become responsible for the administration of the trust fund. With no changes to the Anzac Day Act and the requirement for the Queensland government to make an annual grant for the purposes of the trust fund and the purposes for which payments may be made from the trust fund, institutions, organisations and associations would continue to access annual payments to provide assistance to ex-service men and women and their dependants.

Although QVC will not assume responsibility for developing, promoting and delivering ceremonial activities and events, they will hold the authority to oversee the use of Anzac Square and they will be responsible for the maintenance of the heritage significance of Anzac Square. The bill provides that QVC must prepare and implement a conservation management plan for Anzac Square, which must be approved by the Queensland Heritage Council, and the plan must be reviewed at least once every year.

The establishment of QVC will create a direct pathway of communication between the veterans community and the government. It is important to have these strong mechanisms in place. It is about preserving our long history for the men and women who have sacrificed their lives to support us. It is important that we continue to hold on to that legacy and that we continue to pass the history that we have here onto the next generation. I commend the bill to the House.