




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Veterans Groups

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (7.23 pm): I rise to speak about some of the groups and people I have encountered in my role as shadow assistant minister for veterans. I have endeavoured to meet as many veterans groups as possible. I met with Lieutenant General John Caligari, who runs an excellent program at The Oasis in Townsville.

Mr Harper: The man!

Mr LISTER: I take the acknowledgement from the member for Thuringowa. He has done great work there to help veterans acclimatise to civilian life, to help them with the transition and many other things. I met with Ted Mildren, the President of the RAAF Association, also in Townsville. He is a good man whom I served with. I met with Peter Hindle, who would be known to Townsville members. He is the President of the Vietnam Veterans Association.

Mr Harper: Zac's Place.

Mr LISTER: Zac's Place. He is a real character. I commend them on the housing they provide for veterans there and at Burpengary. I also met with Mrs Jennifer Gregory, President of the War Widows Queensland. I had a great conversation with her and learnt a great deal about her organisation.

I met with Ken Savage, from the Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex Servicemen and Women, who was able to fill me in on all of the issues that are important to those who have lingering injuries from their Defence service. Also, I met with Mr John Lewis, from the Defence Force Welfare Association of Queensland, who made quite a prolific submission to the committee's consideration of the bill that we have just debated. I met with Brendan Cox, the CEO of Legacy Brisbane, and Mr Rob Skoda, who is an old service mate of mine, from RSL Queensland. Thanks, Rob.

In the remaining time I would like to talk about the Stanthorpe RSL Sub Branch. I live just near Stanthorpe. I visited them recently to see that they have acquired a small property, a flat. They intend to embark on a program of providing housing for veterans and the veterans community. I congratulate them for that. They have done that off their own bat. I say to the member for Aspley, my counterpart, the assistant minister for veterans, that I would like to knock on his door at some stage and see whether there is something that the Queensland government can do to help the Stanthorpe RSL in that particular endeavour and perhaps could do for other groups.

There are so many ex-service organisations and veterans groups in Australia—4,000 or 5,000 of them. That diversity is a reflection of the diversity of experiences that veterans and their families have had. It is not an easy thing to say that you have your finger on the pulse of the veterans community. It requires constant engagement and listening to understand the issues that those particular individuals face and the individuals that they represent. I would like to thank the Queensland veterans community for their engagement with me in the time that I have been the shadow assistant minister for veterans. I look forward to meeting many more in the months and years ahead.