




Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 27 October 2021

QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL 2021

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.15 pm): In rising to speak to the Veterans' Council Bill, I acknowledge at the outset that I have family members who fought in the First World War and, therefore, like many Queenslanders, Anzac Square in Brisbane city is very important to me and my family. Like many Australian and New Zealand families, the Pughs sent over three boys to fight on the front line in World War I and two returned home. Sadly, Frank was lost fighting at the Somme. As a percentage of the total population, no-one gave more to the cause than Australia and New Zealand.

The memorial shrine is also very important to my three local RSLs—Centenary, Darra and Sherwood-Indooroopilly. Like many members, although we find the services in our local area to be very popular—they are in fact growing in popularity every year—there is still something irreplaceably important and sacred about Anzac Square in the Brisbane CBD. Despite the increased attendance of the community at our local services, I also have a very high number of service men, women and their families who will attend a local service and then head into the city for the march or conversely attend the beautiful dawn service before returning to their local community for their local service and, of course, a game of two-up at the local golf club.

I have noted in parliament before that there are more Kiwis who call Brisbane home than any other city in Australia.

Mr Harper: Hear, hear!

Ms PUGH: 'Hear, hear' indeed! I checked yesterday and I can point out for the information of the House that 191,000 Kiwis call Queensland home whereas just 114,000 call New South Wales home. From a nation of five million people—that is, New Zealand—a significant number have chosen to make Queensland their home.

Anzac Square is incredibly important to these Kiwis. It is an acknowledgement of the sacrifice of their forebears, but it is also a strong and enduring recognition of the bond that exists between our two nations—a bond that was solidified at Gallipoli. I believe that Anzac Square has significant importance for the Queensland community, particularly the Kiwis who have come to call Queensland home, and it will do for so for generations to come.

That is why it is important to have management plans in place for this sacred site now and into the future. This bill will achieve that. I know that Mount Ommaney locals are very supportive of the state's investment in Anzac Square. My colleague the member for Ipswich West spoke beautifully about some of the features of the upgrade. In my view, attending a dawn service at that beautiful arena is certainly something that every Queenslanders should experience at least once, even if they religiously attend their local services, as I do.

As the member for Macalister noted in her contribution, our veterans are not a homogenous group. I noted earlier that I have three RSLs in my electorate. Each of them is very different in terms of culture and what they choose to focus on in their Anzac Day services and their Remembrance Day services. Darra, under the leadership of Peter Mapp, has a wonderful relationship with many of our

Vietnam veterans in particular because we have a very high Vietnamese population. The establishment of that relationship between our Vietnamese community and the Vietnam veterans has been crucial to that RSL.

Centenary RSL have a strong focus on including young people in their services. For every service they always invite the local school groups along. Every Anzac Day service has a concert quality performance by the Centenary State High School band. The president, George Lefevre, has always believed that children are the future of the Anzac movement and he has always been fastidious about including them.

Sherwood Indooroopilly RSL have a strong focus on the relationships with our First Nations people. This year's Anzac service—I note that many other states were not able to hold an Anzac Day service—had a beautiful tribute to our First Nations people and diggers. It was a wonderful step towards redressing the long-term injustice of failing to recognise our First Nations diggers who have never been properly acknowledged. I thank Bill Cross, the president, for his leadership in incorporating in his services the recognition of our First Nations diggers.

I also want to thank and recognise Glenn Mostyn, the former president. He would always begin our Anzac Day services with a recognition of our First Nations people. He would recognise that they had not been properly acknowledged. This has been a longstanding effort from the Sherwood Indooroopilly RSL and it is paying dividends.

In my local community we have recently named a significant local bridge after Len Waters, the first Indigenous fighter pilot. It is my view that the inroads carved by our local RSLs in recognising the First Nations' war effort was key to securing community support for the naming of this bridge. I thank the Minister for Main Roads for his support for the naming of that bridge. It was a wonderful day to stand there with Len's family and name that bridge after our first Indigenous RAAF fighter pilot. It was a very proud day for my community.

Beyond the local RSLs, our local community is also home to Paws for Hope and Understanding, which provides service dogs for veterans via Wounded Heroes and Aussie Heroes. All of these groups provide different services to our veterans. I should declare that, as listed on my register of interests, I am a proud patron of Paws for Hope and Understanding.

As you can see from the efforts of my RSLs and veterans service groups, as the member for Macalister has highlighted, these groups are so diverse. This is just one electorate's worth of groups and viewpoints and different perspectives that they provide. It is absolutely crucial that we have the space and the room on the council for all of those different views because they are all so important and so valid and so needed. Thinking of the wonderful groups in my electorate, I know each of them could make a wonderful contribution. It is these different voices that will ensure that we continue to address the many different needs of our veterans groups because they are just as diverse as the rest of Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.