




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Savoyards Musical Comedy Company

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (7.29 pm): Gilbert and Sullivan—I am sure those names need no introduction to this crowd. The works of the most well-known writer and composer duo continue to entertain crowds more than 100 years after they were first written, but they were responsible for far more than just their enormously popular plays. Without Gilbert and Sullivan there would not be Savoyards. In 1961 Olwyn and Jim Foley founded a community theatre group driven by community demand to perform and enjoy plays like *Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado* and *HMS Pinafore*. When it came to choosing a name Savoyards was chosen in homage to the famous Savoy Theatre, which was built in Victorian London to perform the works of Gilbert and Sullivan.

From the first performance of *The Mikado* at Wynnum library hall on 2 November 1961 Savoyards have come so far. They have survived wars and the current pandemic. They have even performed non-Gilbert and Sullivan productions! It is estimated that more than a quarter of a million people have attended Savoyards shows and I, like many other baysiders and Queenslanders, am one of those. I have enjoyed many performances, and this year I laughed along to *The Drowsy Chaperone*. If you get a chance to see that, I definitely encourage you to go and see it. As Savoyards celebrate their 60th anniversary they should be proud of the fact that they are Brisbane's longest continuously running musical theatre company, and it is proof that the arts always survive. The public's need for entertainment and escapism always endures.

How has musical theatre survived when more modern forms of entertainment like the Imperial and Star theatres, which existed in Wynnum during the first half of the twentieth century, did not? It is because Savoyards is driven by passionate and talented individuals, and the passion that drove members of the community to build Savoyards is the same flame that keeps it burning more than half a century later. I acknowledge all of them tonight who are here in the chamber. Welcome!

It is a particularly special time for me to stand here and talk about the importance of the arts in Wynnum Manly on the launch day of the second Wynnum Fringe Festival. Much like Savoyards, Wynnum Fringe was founded by a passionate local, Tom Oliver, who wanted to provide artists with opportunities to perform. Although the drag queens and contortionists of Wynnum Fringe might seem like they are a world apart from the absurd satire of Gilbert and Sullivan, both provide much needed and much appreciated outlets to Wynnum Manly's creative community. Without Gilbert and Sullivan we might not have Savoyards, and without Savoyards we might not have the Wynnum Fringe Festival.

To quote WS Gilbert, 'While I'm anything but clever, I could talk like this forever,' so I will wrap this up by thanking Savoyards for providing baysiders and all of Queensland with high-quality theatre experiences. Congratulations on the past 60 years, and I look forward to the next 60 years.