




Speech By
Kim Richards

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2021

QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.55 pm): I rise to support the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021. There are two key aspects to the bill: establishing an authority that will protect and preserve Anzac Square into the future and establishing the Queensland Veterans' Council. In establishing the statutory authority we will preserve and protect this significant public historical site that was opened in 1930 and ensure that it remains dedicated to the men and women who have served our country both in conflict and in peacetime. It is important to preserve its heritage. I note that that would be diminished under the LNP's proposed amendments.

The Shrine of Remembrance and the Eternal Flame remembers those who fought and died in the service of our nation. It preserves their legacy for generations of Queenslanders. It is a place, as the member for Keppel said, where one can reflect on the bravery and sacrifice of those men and women who have fought so hard for our nation. In 2013 there was a significant refurbishment program at Anzac Square which has created a really beautiful space. The Anzac Square Memorial Galleries are curated by the State Library of Queensland and it is a wonderful place for all Queenslanders to visit and to delve deeper into our war history.

The Queensland Veterans' Council Bill provides that the council would administer the Anzac Day Trust Fund, recognising the important role that veterans and their families play in administering the Anzac Day Trust Fund to those organisations that support our ex-service men and women and their dependants. The bill also ensures that Queensland's veterans community is afforded a very direct path to government in matters that are important to them so that we have that good line of feedback. In addition, the establishment of the Veterans' Council ensures that we have strong governance and accountability arrangements in place. The two recommendations from the committee are very sensible recommendations. Recommendation 2 is that clause 13 of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill be amended to provide that at least 50 per cent of the members of the Queensland Veterans' Council are veterans or representatives of the veterans community. Recommendation 3 is to establish the reference group. I think that is really important.

While I am on my feet I want to talk about our very strong veterans community in the Redlands. They are incredibly important to our community. They engage with our young people in our high schools and ensure that the memory of our service men and women and the sacrifice they made is never forgotten. A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to go to Russell Island to celebrate their 75th anniversary. That was a special night. It was so lovely to hear from people who had fought in the Vietnam War and listen to the stories that they shared. It is so important to remember that sacrifice.

On our Redlands coast our Anzac Day commemorations are absolutely incredible, with each of our islands having the most incredible dawn services. This year I had the chance to attend the Macleay Island Sub Branch dawn service. At that service I had a porridge type mix. I had never had it before. It was rum mixed with milk. It was quite a way to start the day. By 10 o'clock we were playing two-up and drinking XXXX Gold. By lunchtime on Anzac Day I was feeling a little bit chuffed.

Our Redlands RSL is supported by many amazing community members, particularly Alan Harcourt, Ian Gray and my very good friend John Butler. As I have said, ours is a really strong community. I also acknowledge Herb Shapcott. Herb served in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, in the 66th Battalion, signals. He served in Hiroshima, Japan. It has been lovely to work with him and with Shane Neumann MP to make sure that we continue to recognise all service men and women who have fought hard for our country. Herb is 94. He loves to rock-and-roll dance. He has spun me around the dance floor a few times and I can tell you that he still has the moves.

I also acknowledge Adrian Aiple, who is a very big contributor. As we have heard from a number of contributions in this place, he is very involved in terms of the significant impacts of mental health and PTSD issues faced by our service men and women. Adrian is a true Redlands champion and a champion for young veterans. He served in Iraq. They have established the Young Veterans Redlands and are doing a terrific job with a range of projects. One of their projects involves young veterans coming together to restore an old car that they are going to race on the track. It is an opportunity to come together and not feel isolated. Adrian is doing great work.

I commend all who are working across the Redlands in the veterans space. Ours really is a very strong community. As the member for Ipswich West noted, we are coming up to Remembrance Day, which is an important time to remember the service men and women in our communities. We do indeed owe a very deep debt of gratitude to the men and women who have fought so hard to make sure that we live in the amazing state and the amazing country that we live in today. I commend the bill to the House.