




Speech By
Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.29 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland Veterans' Council Bill 2021, which provides a modern governance framework to further support our state's veterans now and into the future. This bill will establish the QVC as a trustee of our iconic Anzac Square in the Brisbane CBD under the Land Act 1994. Anzac Square is on Crown land and was placed under the control of the Brisbane City Council in 1974. This bill will ensure the ongoing management, maintenance and operation and Anzac Square as our state's official war memorial.

The new governance arrangement is modelled on similar approaches in Victoria and New South Wales whereby a statutory body has responsibility for the management of their equivalent state war memorial. Much has changed at Anzac Square since it was dedicated on Remembrance Day in 1930. Restoration work between 2014 and 2019 included a major redevelopment of the undercroft, and the space is now fitted with digital technology that provides a platform for educational and interactive exhibitions.

This investment means Anzac Square continues to attract visitors and school groups throughout the year—its appeal has been expanded far beyond its original purpose—and it now requires a new and more modern approach to management and daily operation. Establishing a statutory body will support the future strategic direction and operation of Anzac Square, particularly to the extent that the memorial galleries educate and inform visitors about the service and sacrifice of Queenslanders and Australians in war, peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Our local community of Ipswich has a long and proud association with those who defend our state and our nation. I recently caught up with Karen and the team from Wounded Heroes Australia at their brand new base in Bundamba. Wounded Heroes supports ADF personnel, veterans and their families. Their Bundamba facility includes an op shop and drop-in centre, and Wounded Heroes offers emergency support for current and former service personnel across the country. They have some very exciting plans for the future, and I thank everyone involved in this wonderful national initiative.

I also extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of our former and existing service personnel, some of whom are current members of this place. Many of them are posted at RAAF Base Amberley, Australia's biggest base. I acknowledge the work of our local Ipswich, Redbank and Redbank Plains RSL subbranches and, of course, the ongoing support provided by Russell and the team at Goodna Services Club.

This bill supports these groups and hundreds more like them across the state with a new governance arrangement for the Anzac Day Trust Fund by abolishing the existing board of trustees and transferring responsibility for the fund to the Queensland Veterans' Council. The new council has three areas of responsibility, and ending the term of appointment on the trustees allows for consideration of the skill set and expertise required to support the QVC in the performance of all of its functions. It will also monitor and advise the minister on issues affecting Queensland's veterans community, investigate and report on any aspect of veterans matters referred to it by the minister and consult with the veterans community when developing advice.

Importantly, the bill addresses QVC membership to ensure it will have a diverse mix of up to eight members, with the appropriate skills and experience to best represent our veterans effectively. Council members with qualifications or experience in areas like corporate governance, business or financial management and heritage conservation will continue to provide our Queensland veterans with a voice. Providing the opportunity for non-veteran members of the community with the appropriate skills and experience to be appointed to the council reflects the historical origins of Anzac Square as the broader community's response to World War I and Anzac Square's purpose as a war memorial for all Queenslanders.

A veterans reference group established to support the QVC in the performance of its functions will assist the council in consulting with a wide range of veterans organisations. Stakeholders across Queensland have been consulted on the establishment of the QVC, and extensive consultation on the future management of Anzac Square was conducted between 2017 and 2021.

I am proud to be part of a government that continues to support our veterans, and today we take another important step on that journey. This bill adds to our \$10 million election commitment to deliver more employment assistance, infrastructure funding, accommodation and legal support for veterans. It includes \$4 million for capital works grants to maintain significant buildings, meeting areas and war memorials.

Today we are securing the future of our state's most significant war memorial, providing our veterans with a modern and progressive council of representatives and supporting those who served and continue to serve our country so we can experience the Queensland way of life that we all enjoy today. I commend the bill to the House.