




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2021

QUEENSLAND VETERANS' COUNCIL BILL

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.50 pm): In 1996 I was fortunate enough to be on a Mediterranean hillside on the Gallipoli peninsula on a chilly pre-dawn morning. I was exhausted and cold and in the dark a little bit disoriented. The PA system in 1996 was a little tinny and I strained to even understand the words of the service. However, slowly the sun rose revealing the jagged ridge line, and it lifted to reveal the whole scene. I looked out on the water and, with a shiver down the back of my neck, I could almost see those young Australians and New Zealanders in their small row boats rowing towards the shore under Turkish fire. That day spent exploring Anzac Cove, a place that looms so large in our national idea, was so powerful. With other young Aussies and Kiwis, I saw the beaches, the trenches and the ridges, and we saw those special monuments and brass names that represented a lost young Aussie or Kiwi just like us. I will not forget and hope one day to return to those battlefields in France and New Guinea.

The ceremonies in Anzac Square are incredibly special, and the history that it represents and protects is something of a special legacy. This is a special place. This bill acts to protect Anzac Square and to provide advice to government on veterans matters. I find it curious that the LNP seem to think that veterans would not firmly put their views if given remuneration for their time. The veterans I know in Logan are certainly forthright. They certainly give me a free character assessment and even judgements on what my government does. I am also really pleased that they give me a bit of a compliment behind my back. That is the Aussie way—to be forthright to your front and to save the pats on the back for when others are around.

The LNP attacked the idea that the chair might not be a veteran. I notice that they did not reserve the same judgement for the chair and executive of the Australian War Memorial, which has an equally special role in the commemoration of our veterans. When Brendan Nelson was appointed, there were no similar statements. Indeed, there was general recognition that Brendan Nelson was very deeply committed. Upon his replacement, federal minister Darren Chester said of Nelson's potential replacement that the new director need not be from the military but should have 'empathy and a great deal of commitment to ... Australian service men and women'. I think that is what we need to have in our chair, whether they are a veteran or not—someone who has a great deal of commitment and empathy to our service men and women. That is what I hope we appoint through this process.

Veterans in Logan are a fantastic bunch of people. They are very willing to give of themselves to pass on the message that we have about their service, their commitment, our nation and what makes our nation special. They are a robust group and they do a fantastic job.

I want to explain to the House what my Anzac Day looks like. It starts off in the pre-pre-dawn at Logan Village RSL, where there is a fantastic refurbishment on the village green and some great work has been done by the people of the Logan Village RSL. They have the service completely in the dawn, matching the exact timing of the landings on Anzac Cove. I am lucky enough to be asked to read a poem there, reflecting some of the views of those who took to the boats that day.

I want to recognise the fantastic Greenbank RSL, which is an enormous memorial, in contrast to Logan Village and Jimboomba that I will speak about. In the dawn, with the coming of the light, the Greenbank RSL is absolutely packed with veterans, their families and the entire greater Browns Plains, Boronia Heights and Park Ridge community that comes en masse to make sure this is a special event. During COVID it was very tough for our community because we obviously could not hold these events, but I along with many neighbours stood in the front of our driveways to make sure that memory and spirit was kept alive. Jimboomba RSL also does a fantastic job. They are relatively new. They are the best, as the member for Scenic Rim said—

Mr Krause: Except for Beaudesert.

Mr POWER: No, you said the best, and we will stick to that! They have some fantastic facilities that were enhanced by Skilling Queenslanders for Work. What was really special about that Skilling Queenslanders for Work group is not just that they did a great job of cleaning, painting and presenting the special ex-military buildings; they also learnt an enormous amount about what made the veterans special and they will forever have a protective feeling about that site. Jimboomba RSL—which is the best, as the member for Scenic Rim said—are also fantastic because they involve the cadets of the local area and young people, especially from Jimboomba State School. It is a growing tradition that the people of Flagstone appreciate.

We are one of the few nations on earth that, when it comes time to remember our military, does not glorify a great victory and does not celebrate the defeat of others. Instead, we do the unusual thing of remembering something that was, at best, a difficult stalemate on a difficult area. That is the story of Gallipoli. The veterans I meet do not seek to glorify war, and we do not attempt to do that through this bill. Instead, they seek to remember and they seek to mark that history. The veterans I speak to, especially those whose service still weighs heavily on them, seek to be a living reminder of the enormous decisions that those who are in a democratic house have when sending off soldiers to war. When we send them off to war, we have a commitment to them not just for their time of service but for all of their time because of the enormous commitment that they have given. I support this bill because I think it adds to that commitment and service.