



Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**


**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 November 2022

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Rowland, Mr K; Remembrance Day**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (8.33 pm): Sometimes I have to pinch myself as I cannot believe some of the wonderful people I get to meet as a result of my job. Ken Rowland is one of those people and is also one of our last surviving World War II vets. He is in good nick for a bloke who has just notched up 100 laps around the sun.

For me it was a huge honour to be invited along to Ken's 100th birthday at the Gracemere RSL a couple of weeks back. He is a fantastic character and proudly served our country, with more than 1,400 days of active service during World War II—more than 400 of those were served overseas, mostly on Morotai Island. Tragically, his brother George, a flying officer with the 22nd Squadron, did not make it home after being killed in action in 1944.

There were at least 80 people at the RSL to celebrate Ken's birthday. There were a few speeches. One of Ken's mates spoke about the time that Ken went to the doctors at the age of 99. When asked what medication he was on, Ken responded, 'None.' The doctor was quite amazed and asked him what his secret was to his long and healthy life. He responded, 'I never married.' He was a true character!

Ken's birthday was a wonderful celebration. He was having such a good time that when his ride arrived to take him home in the afternoon he told them that he was not quite ready yet—he was not done partying! Who wouldn't like to have that enthusiasm for life at 100 years old? Happy birthday, Ken, and thank you for including me in your celebration.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the great work of Tony and Ruth Harris for their work and commitment to the Gracemere RSL. Both are wonderful people who give so much to assist the RSL and the broader community.

Also, Remembrance Day is held this Friday—the 11th day of the 11th month at 11 am—when we will observe a minute's silence dedicated to those soldiers who died fighting to protect the nation. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the more than 100,000 Australian lives that were lost from all wars and conflicts and pay my respects and thanks for their ultimate sacrifice. May they rest in peace.