




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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ADJOURNMENT

Remembrance Day

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (8.57 pm): I might be a few days early, but I would like to speak about Remembrance Day and our amazing defence personnel, particularly in Townsville. Townsville is the biggest garrison city in Australia and its history with our Defence Force runs strong and deep in my home town. Both Remembrance Day and Anzac Day are strongly supported by the Townsville community and I know this Friday's service will be no different.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month Townsville and Australia stop to observe a minute's silence in dedication to those soldiers who died fighting to protect our nation in the war to end all wars. This is the least we can do to acknowledge the sacrifice our soldiers have made. I am sure there are many in this House who have made their pilgrimage, either back to the shores of Gallipoli or to the Western Front to some of that sacred ground. I know that when I was principal of Pimlico State High School students used to do trips like that every year; they would make a pilgrimage to understand what it meant to be an Australian during those times.

I will be proud to be attending the Remembrance Day ceremony in Townsville this Friday as will many in our communities. I will be laying a wreath and paying my respects to those who paid the supreme sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedoms we have today. After the service, I will be the guest of Bill Whitburn, the President of the Townsville RSL, for lunch. I am sure the member for Thuringowa will be there with me as will the member for Mundingburra. This is a great event and it is well supported right across the city.

The latest statistics released last month by the ABS show Townsville had the most current and ex-service members compared to any other region in Australia. There are some 5,500 serving Defence members plus 8,700 veterans living in Townsville. This is a number that Townsville is truly thankful for. Our Defence Force is a hugely valuable part of our community, but it has not always been like that. I remember back in the eighties and nineties, as I am sure the member for Thuringowa also will—and legend has it that he was an ambulance officer. I am sure he will remember those days of the 'AJs'. They were certainly a breed unto themselves. They would go out and want to brawl and fight with anyone at any opportunity. You would not go to some pubs because it was the AJs' pub. It was a bit of a free-for-all.

Thankfully, the culture has changed over the years, and they have become such an important and valued part of the fabric of the Townsville community. They have shown us that time and time again with the most recent example being the devastating floods of Townsville in North Queensland in 2019. They are great members of our community. On this Remembrance Day, we will be thanking them for their service and remembering those who have fallen.