




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Bundaberg, Anzac Park Memorial Pool

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.54 pm): I make a desperate plea this afternoon on behalf of the people of Bundaberg to save the Anzac Park Memorial Pool. Bundaberg has seen Works for Queensland money invested in this project. I am not speaking against the new swimming pool; I am talking about the lack of consultation around the demolition. Bulldozing contracts have been awarded. My desperate plea is for the Deputy Premier and the member for Bundaberg to work with the community to make sure we can somehow honour those brave men and women who fought through both great wars to preserve their memorial pool and have it enshrined in the new development and, more importantly, to do this respectfully with the people who feel they have been ignored.

Despite months of community pushback, huge cost blowouts and a heritage application being lodged, we have not heard about anything that will protect this vital piece of our history. In the eleventh hour, I again call on the Deputy Premier to please talk to the people of Bundaberg and put a halt to the demolition work so we can work together on what the project should look like.

It is not about banning the project altogether; it is about consulting with the community to honour the sacrifice the Australian soldiers have made by protecting this classic piece of architecture. The pool is a living memorial. It is a symbolic reference to the community's involvement in both world wars, thousands of children have learned to swim in this Anzac pool and it is a training ground for local Olympians—a place where Rosemary Lassig set her first world record before she swam for Australia in Rome in 1956. To see it destroyed would be a disgrace and a disrespectful blow to our veterans and our community. It is time that we do step in to really get this right. Again, this is a desperate plea and a last-ditch effort to save the pool.

After months of pushback, we know that this project will inevitably go forward but, as I said earlier, it is about making sure it is enshrined as part of our future. I have said before that we do not want to abandon the project altogether. I am not against the new pool; what I am against is destroying this living memorial. I am standing up for those people in the community who have had to petition and work on social media to have their voices heard. It is important. I know that the veterans in our area have been vocal about the possible demolition of this pool. As time goes on, we have to acknowledge that it would not be reasonable for Works for Queensland money to be associated with the destruction of something as important as a memorial pool.

All levels of government have a role to play in this project and I acknowledge the state government's funding. That is the reason that I think the Deputy Premier can and should use his powers to involve the people of Bundaberg in a solution for what the memorial pool should look like as this new development goes forward. I say to the member for Bundaberg and the Deputy Premier: let's work together to ensure the memorial pool can be respected into the future.