




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Stein, Mr G

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.18 pm): I want to pay tribute to a true local hero, George Stein, Holocaust survivor and icon of Brisbane's Jewish community, who sadly passed away on 18 April, aged 95. Born in Romania in 1927, he grew up in Oradea where his father was president of a synagogue. With the town falling to Hungary under the Nazis, the family was transported to Auschwitz in 1943. Sadly, it was the last time he saw his parents and his sister.

Whilst in an inspection line, George was separated from his family and sent to the Dora labour camp at Nordhausen, Germany, where Hitler's V-2 rockets were being produced. He was among those ordered to build rocket componentry, including the gyros which were part of the flight navigation system. At huge personal risk, George set about recalibrating these guidance systems in order for the V-2 rockets to miss heavily populated areas and crash harmlessly at sea. George informed me over lunch in Parliament House that if he was caught doing this, the punishment was death by SS firing squad immediately. Although George never stated it to me, his actions would have undoubtedly saved countless hundreds of lives in England where the V-2 rockets were aimed.

After the Dora labour camp was destroyed by allied forces, George Stein was among survivors transferred to Bergen-Belsen and later liberated by the British. After time at a resettlement camp at Admont in the Austrian Alps, George Stein began his journey home, but he was told by a Russian occupant his house was no longer his.

Returning to Admont, he met Gertrude Kager and they were married for over 60 years until her passing in 2006. The Steins immigrated to Australia in 1955, joining family in Brisbane where he established a mechanical repair business.

George Stein became a foundation member of B'nai B'rith and was president of Brisbane Chevra Kadisha, State Zionist Council of Queensland and South Brisbane shule. When the shule was devastated by fire in the early 1970s he spearheaded a reconstruction appeal. He lectured on the Shoah at schools and service clubs, and he was absolutely a pillar of support to many in his particular community.

Aside from his community involvement, George's commanding stature as a Holocaust survivor and his dedication will never be forgotten with his enduring legacy.

In a speech I gave in Parliament in September 2016, after hosting George for lunch, George was present in the public gallery and I described him as—and I quote from my past words—'the living embodiment of all that is good in mankind, while staring down a dark time in history which displayed the absolute worst example of mankind.'

Vale, George Stein. We will never forget the lessons of the Holocaust. I will never forget the privilege of meeting you.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Thank you, member. I add my condolences to that. The community ended up in the electorate of Greenslopes, as you know.