



Speech By  
**Jason Hunt**


**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Caloundra Electorate, Events**

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (6.09 pm): It was all about commemoration and veterans in Caloundra last week. 14 May marked the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the Australian hospital ship *Centaur* in 1943. At 0410 hours the Imperial Japanese Navy submarine I-177 put a single torpedo into the port side of the *Centaur*, hitting the oil fuel tank and causing a massive explosion. In barely three minutes it was gone and of the 332 people on board only 64 survived, rescued after 36 hours in the water by the destroyer USS *Mugford*.

*Centaur* is now 30 nautical miles off the coast of Moreton Island and it played an important part in the fabric of the community of Caloundra. Indeed, in recent years I have learned that one of my wife's relatives was lost that morning on the vessel. Last week I was genuinely delighted to attend the advanced screening of a brilliant documentary that our fantastic subbranch of the Caloundra RSL caused to be made so that we never forget our local history. Many thanks go to the subbranch President, Heather Christie, and Mr Terry O'Connor for all of their hard work, and a special mention to Mr Jeff Hughes from This Story Australia whose charity did such an incredible job making the documentary into a reality—a documentary made possible by this government's Anzac Day Trust grants.

The following morning I was honoured to emcee a deeply moving commemoration ceremony organised by one of our Caloundra Rotary Clubs, again in conjunction with our subbranch of the Caloundra RSL. On our beautiful headland overlooking the Pacific, the ceremony was well attended by people from all branches of the military and included the families of *Centaur* survivors. I want to single out for special mention Deb Taylor and Jim Lombard in particular and the executive members of the RAAF 23 Squadron, which is the former squadron of the member for Southern Downs, if I am not mistaken. A special shout-out to Unity College for its own *Centaur* commemorations where the names of all of the women and men who perished were read out aloud. It is the first time I have heard that done and it was brilliant—very moving.

That same week I also met with the unstoppable force that is SMEAC, the military acronym—a veteran support group which describes itself as warriors, not victims, that believe in a hand up, not a hand out. Tim, Nick Stephen, Kendall, Matt, Melody and Tony, you are absolute legends. This implacable band of veterans has a fully functional support hub in Brisbane and is already looking to expand its support operations on the Sunshine Coast. The only thing bigger than their ambition is their hearts and I thank them for all of the work that they do with vets and the families of veterans.