



Speech By  
**David Lee**


**MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Gamer, Ms E OAM**

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (12.02 am): Today, 53 Australians will have been diagnosed with leukaemia or blood cancer. That is one Australian diagnosed every 27 minutes. Sadly, each day 16 Australians will lose their lives to that pernicious disease. Thank God for the Australian Leukaemia Foundation. Tonight, I rise to pay tribute to Elaine Gamer OAM, who dedicated 48 years to work as a volunteer with the Australian Leukaemia Foundation. For 27 of those 48 years, Elaine served as a board director. Let me share Elaine's story. It is a sad story, a moving story and an inspirational story about an amazing Hervey Bay resident.

Elaine's story began many years ago whilst she was living in Mount Isa. Elaine's 15-year-old daughter, Lisa, was a bright and lively girl. She was the top of her class. She was an energetic year 12 student who had the potential to achieve her dream of becoming a doctor. Sadly, she contracted leukaemia, or blood cancer, and needed medical treatment in Brisbane.

Elaine and her late husband, Mal, were self-described bushies and salt-of-the-earth working-class people. They could not afford the airfares to Brisbane so they took the long, hot drive from Mount Isa to Brisbane to visit their daughter. Night after night, Elaine and Mal slept in their car outside the hospital until someone generously offered them accommodation.

After about 10 months, Lisa was due to graduate from year 12. Lisa left the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital on a Friday morning and the family took the flight from Brisbane to Mount Isa. Lisa's classmates and teachers met her at the airport. On the following Monday, Lisa attended her year 12 graduation. She passed away the following morning.

Elaine says that before she passed away Lisa briefly rallied and said to Elaine, 'Mum, when this is all over, remember to help the leukaemia patients.' Lisa then closed her eyes and passed away. Elaine says that the promise to fulfil her daughter's dying wish has inspired and motivated her to keep going these past 48 years as a passionate advocate for leukaemia patients and their families. Today, the Australian Leukaemia Foundation provides free accommodation and counselling support in Brisbane to regional families whose loved ones require blood cancer treatment. That means no more sleeping in cars outside of a hospital. In about June 2018, Elaine was awarded an OAM for her advocacy work. Elaine Gamer is now in her early 80s but is always willing to share her story.

I commend Elaine Gamer as a person of faith, compassion and integrity. Her desire to serve our regional blood cancer patients and their families in their time of greatest need is a testament to her love for her daughter, Lisa. Elaine's service through the Leukaemia Foundation is truly Lisa's and Elaine's legacy to our community. Well done, Elaine, and thank you for your service to our community.