




Speech By
Jason Hunt

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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ADJOURNMENT

Veterans

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (10.16 pm): I might raise the tone. I am a very proud veteran. I trained initially as a Morse code operator in the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. The only problem with that was I could not take Morse code to save my life. The Army looked at my six-foot, three-inch frame and decided that armoured vehicles was the obvious career choice for me. I am glad that they did because I ended up in the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment and was transformed from a Morse quambie into a gentleman of the cavalry. That is why I will make every effort I can to assist veterans wherever possible.

To that end, I would draw everyone's attention to a funny sounding word, SMEAC—situation, mission, execution, administration/logistics, and command and signals. A few members in the House will be familiar with this acronym. It is used in the military during order groups to ensure consistency when passing on orders to our military personnel. In Caloundra it now has a different meaning. SMEAC is the name of a group of veterans who are about to do something wonderful in my community.

Following a successful grant from the federal Labor government, SMEAC is going to transform how we understand veterans' hubs. Some years after discovering the recently closed and disused school camp Koongamoon on the shores of Ewen Maddock Dam in Landsborough, a group of veterans who already had plans for a hub of their own found the answer to their prayers. Accommodation buildings, administration facilities, industrial kitchens and a spacious mess facility—all of these things will be taken over by SMEAC soon. Thanks to these veterans, Camp X-Ray Koongamoon will now become a veteran reintegration hub on a grand scale.

Lord knows it did not happen overnight. This is the culmination of years of work by this dedicated band—blood, sweat, tears of frustration and no small amount of colourful language. To that end, I thank Minister Glenn Butcher—himself no stranger to colourful language—and his staff who helped the SMEAC crew fight through the barbed wire entanglements of bureaucracy. They got there in the end and, as we speak, buildings are being gutted and rebuilt for one purpose, and that is for the benefit of veterans. Veterans, in the words of SMEAC, are warriors who need a hand up, not a handout.

So great has been the reach of SMEAC that James Blundell recently dedicated all the royalties from his new song *Almost Anzac Day*—honourable members can hear it on YouTube—to those amazing folks. Stomps, Nick, Whitey, Akkers and Matty: I salute you. Whether it is skilling vets for employment, providing advocacy for those who need it or just providing company for other vets who understand, you are getting it done at last.