




Speech By
David Lee

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

ADJOURNMENT

Victory in the Pacific, 80th Anniversary Commemoration

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.31 pm): Recently we commemorated the 80th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day, the day Japan announced its surrender on 15 August 1945. Tonight I rise to honour our Hervey Bay World War II veterans Herbert Gardner, Stanley Hanna, Ken Hayden, Keith Sander and Alan Williams. I would love to speak about each of these remarkable veterans. Unfortunately, time does not permit.

Keith Sander served in the Royal Australian Air Force No. 33 Squadron. He was unable to attend the VP Day commemoration due to ill health; however, Keith said he served in the flight crew that supplied fuel to the aircraft transporting Japanese Lieutenant General Hatazo Adachi to Wewak, Papua New Guinea, and witnessed Adachi surrender his sword to Australian Army Major General Robertson, commander of 6th Division. I table a copy of the Hervey Bay RSL Sub Branch Inc. correspondence.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 13 August 2025, between members of the Hervey Bay RSL sub-branch, regarding surviving World War II veterans [1121](#).

Alan Williams served in the Australian Army 2nd/25th AIF Battalion. He is a remarkable and engaging man who recently celebrated his 102nd birthday. I attended his 100th birthday and witnessed Alan planting a native quandong tree in the Hervey Bay Botanic Gardens, commemorating his 100th birthday. In a world where the median duration of an Australian marriage is just over 13 years, Alan and Joan Williams were married for 80 years. Alan and Joan first met in 1944, when they were both in the Army and stationed in Western Australia. Alan said—

We saw a lot of each other over the next 12 months and right before I was about to be moved out to New Guinea I asked Joan if she would like to get married. I thought if we didn't we probably would never see each other again. She said yes, so we got married on 20th January 1945. Joan was then discharged from the Army and moved from Perth to stay with my family in Grafton until I got back in 1946.

The pair would eventually move to Ballina in the 1950s and become an integral part of the local community, opening the Ballina Players theatre group, which is now one of Australia's oldest amateur theatre companies. Alan said—

We did four major plays each year and eventually raised enough money to build a brand new brick theatre which is still going today.

In 1985 Alan and Joan were declared citizens of the year, and Joan was awarded an OAM on Australia Day in 2000. Joan passed away just shy of her 100th birthday. This evening I take the opportunity to thank our World War II veterans for their service. Lest we forget.

Honourable members: Lest we forget.

