




Speech By
Hon. Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2026

ADJOURNMENT

Holliday, Mr M; Weatherhog, Mr B

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (9.24 pm): Our Labrador Men's Shed crosses over every part of our community. It is such an important space in our part of the Gold Coast, and tonight I rise to pay tribute to two men we recently lost who gave so much of their time and made our shed what it is today.

Merv Holliday was a cabinetmaker who had a career in our Gold Coast construction industry working on high-rises and projects like the Arundel Plaza shops. He was talented with his hands, especially with woodwork. Merv was firm but fair—a skill that I am told by his good mate from the shed, Len Thompson, he developed over his many years dealing with the CFMEU, a character-building experience indeed. Throughout his more than decade of service to the shed, Merv was president for eight years.

Around five years ago it became clear that the men's shed had outgrown its home. There were not enough car parks and the space they were in was cramped. It was restricting the number of members who could join and be part of this vital space for men to make connections. Merv played a big role in getting our bigger and better shed on the cards. He worked relentlessly alongside secretary Len to make the case. We now have a site, thanks to the work of Councillor Joe Wilkinson, in a great location which can use the touch football field's car park next door and which is close to the Labrador Community Garden. At the last state election the LNP made a commitment of \$500,000 to deliver this new shed. I cannot wait to see it come out of the ground later this year. Although he will not be there to see our new shed, Merv's legacy of selfless service over many years is well and truly secured.

The second servant of our men's shed who passed away recently was another community champion who gave countless hours to many causes: Bill Weatherhog, who was actually my great-uncle. The Labrador Men's Shed was just one organisation over Uncle Bill's lifetime of service to benefit from his incredible work ethic. There was nothing Uncle Bill loved more than our beautiful Broadwater. That showed in his daily power walks along the Biggera Waters and Labrador foreshore and in him joining our local Southport coastguard in 1990. He served for decades at the coastguard, including several years as deputy commodore, always being available if needed for a job and in some weeks volunteering over 50 hours to keep boaties safe. He was a tireless fundraiser for the coastguard and the men's shed. He was not always in a leadership role, but he will be remembered as someone who got in and got the job done—a humble, hardworking servant who made a difference. He will be greatly missed by my Aunt Molly and our entire family.

Vale, Merv. Vale, Uncle Bill.