



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

SPEECH

Thursday, 23 June 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Ms RISHWORTH

Source House
Proof Yes
Responder
Question No.

(Kingston) (NaN.NaN pm)

Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (12:29): I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the great work of two returned service organisations in my electorate of Kingston, the McLaren Vale RSL and the Naval Association Beachvale Subsection. The McLaren Vale RSL makes a real difference in the lives of both members of the veteran community and the wider community by providing a range of age appropriate programs and activities aimed at addressing issues such as social isolation, disadvantage, health and wellbeing as well as positive lifestyle choices. The RSL is a safe and comfortable place where ex-service men and women and members of the wider community can come to socialise and undertake new and different activities. The McLaren Vale RSL also works extremely hard both to commemorate the service of our veteran community and to increase understanding in the wider community of issues of relevance to veterans.

I was honoured to attend the unveiling of the McLaren Vale RSL's Peacekeepers Memorial last weekend. The memorial is a testimony to the hard work of this veterans' organisation. This important and impressive project would not have come to fruition if it was not for the vision and dedication of members of the McLaren Vale RSL, and in particular President Brian Flavel and Secretary John Gyepes. The focal point of the memorial is a decommissioned Leopard tank, which was never deployed and has never 'fired a shot in anger'. This will serve as a fitting tribute to Australian peacekeepers, who may not have always received the recognition they deserve.

Australia has a proud history of providing transitional support to regions troubled by conflict or political turmoil, with over 65,000 Australians having taken part in over 50 UN and other multilateral peace and security operations in more than two dozen theatres of conflict since 1947. We continue this longstanding tradition today as an active contributor of both personnel and financial support to UN and other multilateral peace operations around the world.

The memorial will provide our local community with an opportunity to honour the Australian men and women who have served and continue to serve in important peacekeeping missions. It will become a

valuable asset to the region and it will serve as a visible reminder both of our nation's military history and of the sacrifices made by Australian Defence Force personnel as well as members of the Australian Federal Police in the promotion of peace and stability throughout the world. The McLaren Vale RSL worked hard to secure the decommissioned Leopard tank and to secure funding for the memorial through a range of grants programs, and I commend them on pulling together all these grants programs, all these parcels of money, to make a very splendid memorial indeed.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight the great work done by the Naval Association Beachvale Subsection. This important local community group provides services both to ex-service men and women, many of whom are members of the subsection, and to the broader community.

It was my pleasure also on the weekend to attend the Naval Association's annual anniversary luncheon. This luncheon marks the day that the organisation came into existence. It was a fantastic event celebrating the history of this local group but also recognising the services and sacrifices made by Australia's ex-naval personnel. I also commend the naval cadets who were there waiting on us on the day. They provided a very professional service and were very respectful. I would like to congratulate them. They come out to a lot of different memorial services and really work hard and respectfully. I think they really contribute to our local community.

The subsection contributes significantly to help people with pension and welfare issues and they have a number of pension and welfare officers who provide members and nonmembers with information about the availability of government financial assistance. These officers can help people with applications for payments such as DVA pension and apart from that are an important source of information. The subsection also works in partnership with other local groups and lends its facilities to members as well as keen local residents who perhaps want to be involved in activities such as craft, chess, cards and even indoor bowls. I would like to really commend this organisation for its outreach work and the dedication it provides to its local members and retired servicemen and women. The effort of these people is enormous.

I would like to congratulate both of these organisations for making a significant contribution to veterans in our local area and also to the wider community. (*Time expired*)