



Speech by

Christine Smith

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Hansard Thursday, 12 May 2005

BURLEIGH HEADS RSL SUB-BRANCH

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (6.40 pm): Anzac Day, on 25 April, is one of the most important days in the Australian calendar. It is a day when we remember the enormous sacrifices made in the name of freedom and the loved ones who never came home from war. The spirit of Anzac is about sticking together and looking after one's mates and that spirit continues today, not only as a treasured memory but as a practical exercise. I am talking about the Returned and Services League and, in particular, the Burleigh Heads RSL sub-branch.

Our local RSL is not a big, flashy club. It does not even have a liquor licence or pokies, but it has a warm and welcoming spirit. A few short years ago the club was struggling with just 50 members but now boasts in excess of 200. This is largely due to the efforts of the current president, Mr Chris Keating. Chris visited my office for the first time very soon after my election in 2001 and has been a repeat visitor ever since. I am proud to call him my friend and to be associated with the Burleigh RSL. Chris is, of course, only one of a crew of very hardworking members of the RSL, too many to mention personally but all invaluable to the continued existence of the club. There is also a very active and dedicated women's auxiliary. These people work very hard to keep the club running and provide social events for their members. In this, they greatly succeed. The club is warm and welcoming and I enjoy very much attending meetings and functions there.

As the sub-branch has limited facilities, each year on Anzac Day they hold their 'Gunfire Breakfast' at the Burleigh Heads Bowls Club. The club adjoins the war memorial and the staff generously volunteer their time to make sure the breakfast is available to returned service men and women. It goes to show that the respect inspired by our fighting men and women continues into the next generation and makes me proud of my community.

Unfortunately, serious difficulties arose this year over a liquor licence for the breakfast and the traditional rum and milk was in jeopardy. I was only alerted to the difficulty at the last minute but fortunately, due to some frenzied dashing about and the cooperation of staff at Liquor Licensing and a local police officer, I was able to get the variation to the liquor licence issued and the club opened at 5 am. My fellow Gold Coaster and friend and the minister for liquor licensing, Margaret Keech, and I will have our heads together early next year to ensure that such a problem does not happen again.