

ANZAC YOUTH PARADE AND SERVICE — RSL CITY OF COCKBURN

Statement

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [5.20 pm]: I am delighted to report to the house that yesterday I had the very great privilege to join the RSL City of Cockburn Anzac Youth Parade and Service. This was a project introduced by RSL life member Arthur Stanton back in 2001. Mr Stanton was present, as he always is, yesterday, along with all of the stalwarts that members from the South Metropolitan Region may be acquainted with, including Digger Cleak, OAM, RSL president, and Mrs Kay Cleak, who of course does all the work! It was great to catch up with them, together with representatives from a whole range of service departments and service organisations including all the helpers and volunteers from the RSL City of Cockburn sub-branch and so on. Those who helped or assisted included police, St John Ambulance and the City of Cockburn.

The things that will interest members, I am sure, about this day was the scale of the operation. There were 1 500 schoolchildren from 32 different schools. I must say, when they were calling them up four at a time by the name of the school to lay their wreaths, it sounded to me like a rollcall of all my polling booths, which made me a bit twitchy! These were real, dinkum Aussie kids from all sorts of backgrounds in the South Metro Region sharing in a very special occasion—not only sharing, though, but participating actively.

I want to mention some of the people who were involved. A special mention would have to go to Seton Catholic College. I was awfully impressed with the contribution from Seton Catholic College. I even said to one or two people, “If I had kids and I was looking for a school, I would look at sending them to Seton Catholic College.” It provided, firstly, the masters of ceremony in Natalie McArthur and Jerry Mathias. They were absolute professionals in conducting the proceedings and a credit to their school. I was also impressed by Grace Arthurson, a senior student from Seton Catholic College, who gave the Anzac Day address and did so very well indeed. The Seton Catholic College choir also performed with distinction. I would like to give a mention also to Shanyka Parker from Coolbellup Community School who did the acknowledgement of country, something that the Parliament itself was considering earlier today. Grace Ricetti from Jandakot Primary School recited an Anzac Day resolution. I have mentioned Grace Arthurson, who gave the Anzac Day occasional address. Luna Har Paz from Spearwood Alternative School recited the poem *In Flanders Fields*. Gemma Sherlock from Our Lady of Mount Carmel Primary School recited the Prayer of Remembrance. The Ode to the Fallen duties were shared by Eva Antic and Lauren Cicanese from St Jerome’s Primary School. I was very impressed, as were all present, with the way in which these young people conducted themselves. They conducted themselves with aplomb, polish and dignity, and their respective schools and their parents can be very proud of them.

It was also a special occasion for many of us present because we enjoyed Vice Regal patronage again this year. Her Excellency the Governor, Kerry Sanderson, AO, graced the occasion in every sense of the word. It was a delight to have her present as her term as Governor draws to a close. For many who were present, this may have been their last public occasion to enjoy the Governor’s presence. It was appreciated. She went to a lot of trouble to be there. The duties of Governor are onerous, but I know that she enjoys doing this sort of thing. She was conspicuous in greeting everybody, and particularly making sure that she got to see as many schoolchildren as she could. Given that there were about 1 500 schoolchildren at that event that was held just off Spearwood Avenue, that was no small undertaking. Our Governor attempted that with her usual grace, dignity and commitment. That was a great occasion. Congratulations to the RSL, the City of Cockburn, and the 32 schools and others involved on this occasion, on which we did indeed remember those who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country.