

BRIAN LINDSAY PEERS

Statement by Member for Warnbro

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro) [12.55 pm]: I rise to mark the passing of a fine Western Australian, former Navy clearance diver Brian Lindsay Peers, who passed away on 16 November 2009 from lung cancer sustained as a result of service-related exposure to asbestos.

Brian was amongst the earliest of Navy divers to serve in the Special Air Service Regiment. In those days, when the nation was desperate to establish a counter-terrorist capability, Brian was in the thick of the most operational task going anywhere in the defence force. Whether it was diving from submerged submarines, scaling the outside of Bass Strait oil rigs, experimenting with explosive entry techniques, night driving at break-neck speed without lights, or charging through the house in live-fire close quarters battle training, Brian contributed mightily to every endeavour. Such was his skill and dedication that he eventually served in the counter-terrorist squadron on three separate occasions and was ultimately accorded the responsibility of training soldiers and divers for service in the counter-terrorist squadron. Brian later returned to the Navy and took on the role of training clearance divers for the Special Air Service Regiment selection course. Scores of clearance divers owe their success on the selection course to Brian's guidance. Despite carrying a raft of painful injuries from his long years of service on line, Brian invariably led the charge in every activity. Brian eventually took his dedication and talent for teaching to the field of submarine escape and rescue in the latter years of his working life. In this way, many escape instructors and hundreds of submariners also benefited from Brian's guiding hand.

I take this opportunity to convey my deepest condolences to Brian's partner, Wilma, his daughter, Tamara, and son, Josh, and his extended family and loved ones. Brian was a loving family man, a thoroughly professional diver and a stalwart mate. He will be sorely missed.