



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Surf Lifesaving**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 26 May 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 26 May 2014  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Thistlethwaite, Matt, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (10:42): I wish to outline to the Federation Chamber the unveiling of the memorial to former lifesavers which occurred on 27 April at Coogee Beach in my electorate. The fallen lifesavers memorial is a wonderful tribute to lifesavers throughout Australia who have paid the supreme sacrifice and given their lives defending our nation in all theatres of war. The memorial was unveiled by Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Marie Bashir, on 27 April. Despite the inclement weather, also present were the Premier of New South Wales, many local politicians and dignitaries, the member for Wentworth and the Minister for Communications representing the Prime Minister, military personnel, veterans and lifesavers of all ages.

The memorial is in the form of a wonderful bronze sculpture from renowned sculptor Alan Somerville. It conveys perfectly that bond between the tradition of and the affinity between surf lifesavers and military service of our nation. The sculpture is of two men. A lifesaver standing by the iconic belt and reel—the wonderful symbol of lifesaving in Australia—he is clasping hands with an Aussie digger about to go into battle. They are both facing the sea at the historic Coogee Beach, a part of the stretch of coastline along Sydney where the birthplace of surf-lifesaving took place. The sculpture represents community and service to our nation.

When you visit many of the surf clubs throughout Australia, you will see on the walls honour rolls dedicated to those who served our nation and paid the supreme sacrifice. In World War I, lifesavers signed up in droves. They saw their military service as an extension of their community service. The toughness of the Aussie digger is conveyed perfectly in that project.

The memorial was the idea of Tony Waller, a former President of Coogee Surf Life Saving Club. He was inspired by the involvement of kids in Anzac Day. After many years of work he has brought this idea to fruition, and I thank Tony for his vision and hard work.

At the launch, the foundation clubs were involved and it was a wonderful celebration of surf-lifesaving, particularly with the involvement of local nippers. The project was overseen by a trust, made up of representatives of the mayor of Randwick, the RSL and military personnel. I wish to thank the members of the trust for their work in the memorial for fallen lifesavers.