



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

ADJOURNMENT

Peres, Mr Shimon, Battle of Beersheba

SPEECH

Thursday, 13 October 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

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Senator FAWCETT (South Australia—Deputy Government Whip in the Senate) (19:10): In the short period I have available, I just want to remark on the opportunity that many of us here had here in Parliament House this week to sign the condolence book for Shimon Peres, twice Prime Minister and ninth President of Israel and a statesman who had a political career spanning nearly 70 years in that nation.

It brought to my mind, in this year of the Centenary of Anzac, another centenary that we should be remembering. We tend to think frequently of Gallipoli and iconic places in Europe, but on 31 October next year we will be commemorating the 100th year since the charge of the 4th Light Horse at Beersheba, which is a significant event in Australia's military history. It brings back to us names like Allenby and Chauvel and some of the great achievements of our forefathers during that conflict.

I was a little surprised last weekend to see in the *Sunday Mail* an article by a South Australian ABC journalist, Peter Goers, talking about the Australian soldiers memorial in Beersheba, which he said was not well regarded or looked after. I would have to say my experience, having been there myself, is that in fact Australia's contribution is very well regarded in Israel, and the memorial was very well cared for. I was speaking just recently with the minister for heritage of Israel about the centenary coming up next year. It is clear that both at the individual level that I have witnessed when I have spoken to people in Israel, including at Beersheba, and from a government perspective they value Australia's relationship with Israel not only now but particularly in the historical context, and there is significant commitment to making that 100th anniversary a significant event to commemorate Australia's role in the region historically and Australia's ongoing role, seeking to be an agent for good and for peaceful outcomes for all people living in that region.

So I thank the Israeli people for their ongoing friendship with Israel and for their care and interest in the memory of our forefathers who served during that great charge. I would encourage Australians, as we continue through this period of celebrating the Centenary of Anzac, to look also at those events of the Light Horse in Beersheba.

The PRESIDENT: I remind honourable senators that legislation committees will meet to consider estimates commencing on Monday, 17 October 2016 at 9 am. Program details will be published on the Senate website.

Senate adjourned at 19:13