

Speech for: Beaconsfield Anzac Memorial Service

- Good afternoon everyone and welcome to this important memorial service at Beaconsfield.
- To begin with, Cardinia Shire Council acknowledges that we are on the traditional land of the Bunurong and Wurundjeri people and pay our respects to their elders past and present.
- It is a great privilege to join you today to honour the memory of those who have sacrificed their lives in service to our country, and those who continue to serve in our defence forces today.
- Today we gather to remember and to give thanks.
- To remember those ordinary, decent Australians who undertook acts of extraordinary bravery and courage.
- To thank the young men and women who fought and died to protect the way of life we still enjoy today.

- And to acknowledge all current and former members of our defence forces – the brave people who have represented and continue to represent our country.

[Pause]

- As I understand, Beaconsfield Progress Association has held an Anzac Memorial Service since 1999.
- The service was instigated by the late Tony Rushton.
- Thank you to the Beaconsfield Progress Association for holding this service to remember those who have served our country.
- As Mayor of Cardinia Shire, I'm proud that Council is committed to supporting events just like this through our Festivals and Events Grants program.
- I take this opportunity to thank everyone who is attending today and those participating in a voluntary capacity.
- I look forward to joining you again later in the program to read the memorial address.

- Thank you.

[Break]

[BELOW: Memorial address provided by Beaconsfield Progress Association – to be delivered later in the program]

- Thank you.
- I'm now honoured to deliver the memorial address, which has been researched and written by Penny Harris Jennings.

[Pause]

- Today we gather to commemorate soldiers, men and women who served in the Australian military forces, now known as the Australian Defence Force.
- Beaconsfield has had its share of enlistees throughout the years.
- It would be fitting, therefore, to remember the soldier after which this reserve has been named.

- In 1951, the then Shire of Berwick unanimously agreed that this land with the war memorial would be known as *Bonette Reserve*.
- George Leonard Francis Bonette was born in 1890.
- On the 21st of June 1915, David, as he was now calling himself, enlisted for the First World War.
- After training at Seymour, David left Australia on the 26th of August 1915 to serve with the 21st Battalion and postal corps.
- He was wounded but continued to serve, initially in Egypt and then France, until his return to Australia after the war in 1919.

[Pause]

- David came to be the companion of Ada Amytage and lived at 'Holm Park', here in Beaconsfield.

- There he collaborated with Ada, and through her contacts, they embarked upon multiple projects to raise funds for various charities, groups and causes within the district.
- These fundraising efforts would benefit returned soldiers and scouts in particular.
- David held many official positions, local and further afield, including the appointment in 1934 as an honorary life governor of the Eye and Ear Hospital Melbourne, in appreciation of his efforts on behalf of the institution.
- Following Ada's death in 1939, David continued living in Beaconsfield; he had purchased this vacant lot of land, probably thinking he would eventually build a home and retire.
- In 1941 David enlisted for World War Two.
- So determined to serve again, he reduced his age on enlistment to qualify.

- He served in the dental division here in Australia and was discharged in 1944.
- In 1945 David sold Lot 1, Beaconsfield to the Shire of Berwick for the extension of the land encompassing the war memorial.
- After the small park was named *Bonette Reserve* in 1954, the war memorial was moved to the centre of the park and a fence was erected.
- 1954 was also the year that David passed away in the Mount Royal Hospital Parkville; a hospital for veterans.

[Pause]

- The site on which we're gathered was dedicated to David by the Council at the request of the residents of Beaconsfield for his outstanding contribution to the Beaconsfield community.
- David was a person who devoted his entire adult life to service for the benefit of others and his country.

- His contribution is remembered by this small park and today we acknowledge his exceptional service to Beaconsfield.
- Thank you.