



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hansard

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CORRECTIONS

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

their representatives and employers getting together and coming to an appropriate arrangement for their business. That is what enterprise agreements are all about: they're about making sure that the interests of all concerned are duly regarded, that they fall outside the generic regime of a modern award and that those involved get to do something that gets it right for their particular business organisation. We encourage that.

We're also encouraged by the fact that we've seen a record number of enterprise agreements and a record number of workers subject to enterprise agreements. That means appropriate industrial relations tailored to the work, to workers and to the businesses that employ them. This has been a fantastic set of reforms, and we will see the benefits of them continue in the years ahead. I'm encouraged by the fact that real wages are going up for consecutive quarters, and may that long continue.

We've also got to make sure we continue to improve the legal arrangements around businesses to make sure that they have every incentive to increase productivity. Again, increased productivity means more efficient ways of conducting business. I'm so glad to finally see the end of this horrible cycle of trying to win the game by cutting wages to the lowest amount possible. It does not serve families, it does not serve our society and it does not serve business in the longer term. The race to the bottom on wages hurts everyone in the end. You end up with inferior industries. We saw it in child care and we saw it in aged care. If you continue the race to the bottom on wages, what you end up with is an unmotivated workforce, poor productivity and poor service delivery. So I'm glad to see that these reforms are continuing to benefit workers. May they long reign.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilkie): The member's time has expired. The time allotted for this debate has expired. The debate is adjourned and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

B'nai B'rith: 80th Anniversary

Mr LEESER (Berowra) (12:57): I move:

That this House:

(1) recognises the 80th anniversary of B'nai B'rith in Australia, an organisation whose work has strengthened not only the Australian Jewish community but the entire Australian population;

(2) commends B'nai B'rith for its leadership in promoting education, interfaith understanding, cultural expression, and the fight against antisemitism;

(3) notes its range of initiatives to support the community including the Courage to Care program, youth leadership development, and its charitable trust, which have left a lasting mark on the community; and

(4) acknowledges the volunteers and members of B'nai B'rith past and present, whose 80 years of service reflect our nation's values of compassion, justice, and responsibility.

I'd like to welcome members of B'nai B'rith. We don't usually get such a crowd here in the Federation Chamber, but such is the importance of the 80th anniversary of B'nai B'rith. I'd like to acknowledge the member for Macnamara and the member for Wentworth, who are also going to be making contributions in this debate. And I'd particularly like to thank past president James Allman, who alerted me to the 80th anniversary of B'nai B'rith. B'nai B'rith have been here having their triennial convention, from both Australia and New Zealand, and it's wonderful to welcome them to the Federation Chamber this day.

Eighty years ago, in 1944, a group of Jewish German and Austrian refugees, who fled the horrors of Nazism, gathered in Sydney to establish B'nai B'rith in Australia. They built on the traditions of a global organisation that had already existed for a century, animated by the values of fellowship, compassion and communal responsibility. What began as a small social and cultural organisation quickly grew into one of the most enduring and impactful community organisations in this country. From its earliest days, B'nai B'rith created spaces where people could connect, learn and share Jewish culture with the broader Australian community.

In 1945, it founded one of the first youth groups in Sydney, followed soon after by one in Melbourne. In 1948, it established its first community home in Darlinghurst, with further centres in Sydney and Melbourne to follow. By the 1960s B'nai B'rith had expanded across the Tasmin, with branches in Wellington and Auckland, ensuring its mission reached Jewish communities in New Zealand, as well. In 1961, it launched the Hillel foundation. B'nai B'rith has established so many offshoots in its time. Hillel offered residential facilities and counselling for universities students, a project so successful that it became an independent organisation after nearly four decades.

Closer to home for me—and I'm so delighted to have a Jewish community institution in my electorate—B'nai B'rith also founded retirement villages, beginning in Wahroonga in 1964, in my electorate. Today, Kadimah Gardens continues the proud tradition of providing quality affordable accommodation for older members of the community. I want to acknowledge the Kadimah Gardens committee, led by Ada Berger. In particular, it's great to see the great Jack Aghion here, also from Kadimah, in my electorate, and others.

Perhaps B'nai B'rith's most enduring contributions have been in education and building bridges between communities. In 1981, it organised the Holocaust exhibition in Australia, held at the Sydney Town Hall. That exhibition travelled the country, was attended by tens of thousands, and ultimately led to Holocaust studies being part of the school syllabus.

The work directly inspired the Courage to Care program, and I want to acknowledge Ernie Friedlander and his great work in that. Launched in Melbourne and then in Sydney, Courage to Care teaches Australians—especially school students—about the dangers of prejudice and discrimination. It empowers them to become upstanders, not bystanders, inspiring young people to embrace and celebrate the beauty of our Jewish tradition, which teaches us to treat others with loving kindness. In a period where antisemitism is escalating, Courage to Care has never been more important. B'nai B'rith have established intercultural celebrations since the early 90s across a range of communities, and their work on intercultural and interfaith dialogue is very important.

Of course, B'nai B'rith understands and appreciates freedom. Its antidefamation oration began in 1988, and it has provided platforms for people like Pat Dodson, David Rosen and Helen Suzman. Its Gold Medal Award has been given to both Bob Hawke and John Howard. Its Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award was initiated in 1990, with recipients like Tim Costello and Gus Nossal. In 2004, they helped secure parliamentary resolutions against racism and antisemitism in this parliament and in various state parliaments.

I was proud to deliver the B'nai B'rith Human Rights Oration in 2018, called Human Rights Hijacked. I should acknowledge Anna Berger, who was the state president at that time. It was probably one of the most important speeches I've made. In fact, it spurred on a book, *Nonsense on Stilts*, in response to it. It's always a place to go to make important speeches and contributions.

B'nai B'rith has also done much, whether it's work for young people, work that relates to the arts, work that relates to antidiscrimination and reducing racism in this country, or work that is focused on the advancement of human rights. In celebrating this anniversary today, we celebrate not only a story of remarkable organisation but also a story of modern Australia: of refugees who arrived in this country with little, but who built institutions of strength and who, in turn, strengthened the nation that welcomed them. May B'nai B'rith continue for another 80 years to lead, to educate, to inspire and to unite Australians of all backgrounds.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilkie): Is the motion seconded?

Mr BURNS (Macnamara) (13:02): I second the motion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you reserve your right to speak?

Mr BURNS: No, I'm going to speak right now.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: In that case, I give the call to the member to Macnamara.

Mr BURNS: It is rare for the Federation Chamber to be standing room only, but it is a great privilege for us to have members of B'nai B'rith here to be part of this fitting and important tribute to B'nai B'rith's 80 years in this country. I am a product of a community designed and fed by B'nai B'rith. I grew up in Melbourne's Jewish community, which was and still is a vibrant community—one which is full of people who give back to the community and who speak up on its behalf in a way that feeds Australian public life and celebrates multiculturalism and diversity whilst never forgetting the history of Melbourne's Jewish community: one of persecution and one of Holocaust survivors coming and making their place here in this country of ours, finding a safe haven in doing so.

For me, B'nai B'rith is an organisation that helps shape the very vibrant and wonderful community that I'm in and helps shape the identity that I'm proud to have, as a proud Jewish Australian. Since coming to and being established in Australia in 1944, B'nai B'rith has been more than just a community organisation. It has been a home to the largest percentage of Holocaust survivors of any other city outside of Israel, and it has also been a place where the vibrancy and breadth of the activity it's involved in has been truly astonishing.

The first B'nai B'rith youth group was formed in Sydney, followed by one in Melbourne in 1945. The opening of the first offices for B'nai B'rith was in Darlinghurst in 1948, and the Hillel Foundation was established in 1961, serving as a residential campus for Jewish university students. Affordable accommodation for elderly Jewish Australians was set up in Sydney in 1964 and then, a few years later, in Melbourne. In 1977 there was also an opportunity shop known as the B'nai B'rith Bargain Bazaar, a fantastic and catchy title. In 1981, B'nai B'rith organised—as the member for Berowra so eloquently put before—the first-ever Holocaust exhibition in Australia, held at Sydney Town Hall, which I believe was visited by over 55,000 Australians and 12,000 school students. For 80 years, more broadly, B'nai B'rith has comprised wonderful units that are scattered around the country, giving so much to not only each other but the broader community as well.

The highlight for me also, I have to mention, just like the member for Berowra, is Courage to Care, which is a program designed, led and fed by B'nai B'rith, which is all about telling young people in Australia that you must be

an upstander against racism, not a bystander in witnessing it. That lesson, as the member for Berowra mentioned before, has never been more important. To have young people in Australia willing to speak up against racism has never been more important. We can write laws outlawing it, we can write laws giving more protection for security agencies, but what actually is our best and most important fight against racism is the collective commitment to fight it as one united society. For young people, that is so important across schools and universities, and that work by Courage to Care is work that I'm extremely proud of. I met with Mike Zervos, our local staff member for Courage to Care, who's a great person and one who believes in this. I spoke to the Armchair Society recently, I've sponsored the B'nai B'rith Jewish youth art competition for many years, and I am so proud to stand in this place to acknowledge, alongside the member for Berowra and the member for Wentworth, the incredible contribution of B'nai B'rith to Australian life.

I'll mention a few people by name so they're etched into the *Hansard* because they have made an enormous contribution to B'nai B'rith and to our country. To James Altman, Elaine Altman, Peter Cappe, Clare Cappe, Irene Kirschner, Leon Nissen, Deirdre Wainrit, Alan Wainrit, Anna Marks, Denise Monheit, Rosa Schattner and Peter Schattner, thank you. No doubt, whenever you create a list like that you forget many, many people. But to anyone who has contributed to B'nai B'rith; to anyone who has walked inside a unit of B'nai B'rith to engage, to learn, to discuss, to challenge; and to anyone who has been a part of any of B'nai B'rith's programs that have done not only so much for the Australian Jewish community but for the Australian community at large, I say thank you.

I am proud to stand here in the House of Representatives' off-Chamber, the Federation Chamber, to mark 80 years of B'nai B'rith in Australia and as they say in Yiddish, biz hundert un tsvantik, to 120 and more. Congratulations.

Ms SPENDER (Wentworth) (13:07): I'd also like to commend the member for Berowra for bringing forward this important motion, as well as support the words of the member for Macnamara. It is an absolute pleasure and honour to be able to stand here today and celebrate B'nai B'rith and everything that the organisation has brought to this country.

One of the great privileges in my place, particularly in Wentworth, is to see firsthand the huge contribution the Jewish community has made to the strength of not only the community in Wentworth and not only the Jewish community but the entire country. B'nai B'rith is just a perfect example of this. Their core message I read as I was researching this is:

Our core values place humanity at the centre of everything we do.

And it is those core values that I believe are more important than ever in this country. It is remarkable to see the breadth of positive impact that B'nai B'rith has brought to the country over its 80 years, from retirement villages, shopping centres and social groups to really starting Holocaust education. I'm very privileged to have the Sydney Jewish Museum in my electorate. To know that Holocaust awareness and education was really born out of that 1981 Holocaust exhibition, which has now transformed to museums around the country, is absolutely critical and really speaks to the impact that B'nai B'rith has had on this country.

Very much like the previous two speakers, I want to shout out Courage to Care, because that is the organisation and the program that I have seen having the greatest direct impact on students of all faiths in my electorate. I had the enormous privilege of being in one of those programs recently at Rose Bay secondary College. I sat in the room, in the circles with the students, listening to Susan Warhaftig. She talked about her own experience as a two-year-old escaping the horrors of the Holocaust and World War II. Seeing how that lived history transformed the perspectives of those young people of all faiths and all backgrounds in the room was incredible. It was a beautiful and very uplifting experience. It is remarkable to see that Courage to Care has had that sort of impact on 400,000 students around Australia. That is absolutely critical.

Again, that message of being an upstander, not a bystander, is one that I think is more important than ever. When I contemplate where we are right now as a country and some of the challenges that we do face as a country, how do we bring that forward? How do we deal with some of those? I think it is very much the values that B'nai B'rith has brought to the country that are the ones the ones we need to continue to live with.

Last week I was speaking to members of the Australian Union of Jewish Students who were in Canberra, and I'm going to be speaking to members again this week, about how we fight antisemitism. This is not just about antisemitism; it's about how we continue to make sure that this country is the most successful and welcoming multicultural, multifaith country in the world. It is through programs like those championed by B'nai B'rith that we can continue to do that. It is that message of compassion and of bridging divides that B'nai B'rith has championed throughout its work. Its championship of human rights has set an incredible example both to the local community in Wentworth and around the country as well. I think this has been a remarkable contribution to the broader country.

I would also like to shout out a few people in the room. I don't have everyone's name on this list, but I would particularly like to shout out Anna Marks and Janine Zimble as the president and immediate past president for what they have done. I'm not going to do any more names lest I leave out those who should be recognised. It is really important and wonderful that they've come to Canberra to celebrate this. I am really proud to be able to stand here and celebrate B'nai B'rith as well. We all try to have lives beyond the concerns of our families and our work, and it is that gift of giving beyond yourself and beyond your immediate concerns which makes this country stronger, more successful and a more compassionate and happier place to live in. So thank you to everyone from B'nai B'rith for those decades of service to the country. It has made an enormous difference and, I hope, will continue to for another 80 years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Wilkie): There being no further speakers, the debate is adjourned, and the resumption of the debate will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

Sitting suspended from 13:13 to 16:00

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Fossil Fuel Industry

Dr RYAN (Kooyong) (16:00): The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is currently undertaking a review of arrangements to supply the eastern states' gas market—a review based on the false proposition that new gas production is required to meet our domestic needs. The myth that Australia has a shortage of gas is a creation of multinational fossil fuel companies. Only 16 per cent of Australian LNG was sold domestically last year. The rest was exported. Some of those exports honour long-term contracts, but a quarter do not.

Uncontracted Australian gas is sold every day on the spot market for export to international markets. Australians compete with exporters for our own gas—gas which is taken from us tax free. The IEA reports that the world is heading for an oversupply of oil and gas by 2030. That will leave new projects as stranded assets. Australians do not need new fossil fuel projects. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that any new fossil fuel projects will take us over the 1.5 degrees of global warming. Australians do not want new gas projects; we want our government to stop approving new fossil fuel projects and to legislate the redirection of gas from the export market to our domestic market for our own use.

Vietnam Veterans' Day

Ms TRISH COOK (Bullwinkel) (16:01): On 18 August I had the honour of joining the Northam RSL to mark Vietnam Veterans' Day. It was a moving occasion where we remembered the courage and sacrifice of more than 60,000 Australians who served and we honoured those who never came home. As part of that beautiful ceremony I also reflected on Lieutenant Colonel Vivian Bullwinkel's role in the war. She was a nurse and a World War II hero, and the sole survivor of the Banka Island massacre in 1942, where 21 of her fellow nurses were murdered. She endured 3½ years as a prisoner of war, and when she returned she devoted her life to nursing, supporting veterans and honouring those who had perished. As many of you know, the electorate of Bullwinkel is named in her honour.

Vivian's story didn't end there; in 1975, as the Vietnam War drew to a close, she led a team of nurses in Operation Babylift, a mission to rescue orphaned and surrendered Vietnamese Australian-fathered babies and children. Around 300 of those children were brought to Australia in cardboard boxes on the aircraft floor. It was far from ideal, but it saved their lives. So, on 18 August at the RSL in Northam, I honoured our Vietnam veterans, support personnel and nurses like Vivian Bullwinkel, whose courage reminds us that service comes in many forms. Lest we forget.

Climate Change

Dr SCAMPS (Mackellar) (16:03): Climate change is continually raised as one of the biggest concerns of my community. From parents worried about their children's future, to people who are concerned whether they'll be able to insure their home in areas prone to fires, floods or coastal erosion, they want action that's grounded in science and urgency.

Right now, we have a critical opportunity to set Australia's 2035 emissions reduction target, a target that will shape our path towards a net zero economy. This isn't just a number; it's a signal to the world, to investors and to our communities about how serious we are about tackling the climate crisis. Australia is a privileged, wealthy and respected nation. What we do counts, especially in the eyes of our Pacific neighbours. Anything less than 75 per cent by 2035 risks locking in dangerous climate impacts and undermining our credibility, while a strong target would drive clean energy investment, protect public health and help Australia thrive in a decarbonising global economy.

This is also about fairness. Communities on the front line of climate change—regional towns, coastal suburbs and vulnerable populations—deserve leadership that puts their safety and future first. We cannot afford to be timid.