

## PRIVATE MEMBERS BUSINESS

### Blood Donation

**Mr ROBERT** (Fadden) (7.10 p.m.)—I rise to support the intent of the private member's motion and, indeed, support the comments of the last speaker when he called for all parliamentarians to take the plunge and give blood. Many people today would not be alive if it were not for Australia's generous, voluntary, unpaid blood donors who give blood each week to help those in need. It is one of those things that we used to expect to be there for us, but only a very small proportion—indeed, one in 30 people—actually gives blood; yet, sooner or later, one in three of us will need it. People who give blood are united by their generosity and the desire to give something constructive back to the community. One in three of us will need blood or a blood product. That is a sobering thought.

More than 21,000 donations are needed every week in this country to make sure there is enough blood and product for those one in three Australians who will need it. Blood is needed for surgery and trauma patients, but two-thirds of it is actually needed by people with cancer, blood disorders, heart and kidney disease, pregnant women and babies. Currently three per cent of the Australian population are blood donors and they donate, on average, twice a year. In my electorate of Fadden, the fastest-growing electorate in the nation, 5½ per cent of men and women are blood donors, which is above the national average. I salute them and thank them all. The frequency of the blood donors in Fadden is not quite twice per year, so I encourage all those hardworking men and women in Fadden to ensure that they give blood at a minimum of twice a year.

The Gold Coast donor centre of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service aims to collect 114 donations each week. Last week, although they collected slightly under target for plasma, their centre was above target for whole blood. So, well done, Annie and the team, at the Gold Coast collection centre—that was a great result. However, the centre has started to see a dip in appointment levels, coinciding with the start of winter—and, yes, we do get winter on the Gold Coast—and, of course, the recent spate of slightly inclement weather. The donor centre is working hard, though, to get the donation message out to its current donors and potential donors and is shortly moving operations to a new donor centre in Robina, which will increase the number of donor beds from eight to 13. This will also double the amount of plasma that they are able to collect.

Due to medical advances in the treatment of diseases and illnesses, the need for plasma is set to double in the next decade, and therefore Australia desperately needs more donors and for donors to donate more regularly. On average, Australians donate twice per year, but they can donate every 12 weeks. The Australian Red Cross Blood Service are a national blood service, as we know, and if blood collection in one area is low they are able to distribute interstate to help meet the needs of hospitals and patients wherever they are in this great country of ours.

We need 21,000 donations each week. This winter, to cover the number of donors who will be unable to donate due to colds and flus, 40,000 new donors are needed now. All blood types are needed, but O-negative donations are crucial. O negative is a universal blood that can be given to anyone in an emergency, yet only a small percentage of the population are O negative, including me, so I can assure myself that I am in demand to give my blood as often as possible. Mr Deputy Speaker Sidebottom, I can see that you are encouraged by that and I look forward to lying beside you on a bed when we give blood together—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr S Sidebottom)**—Finish the sentence!

**Mr ROBERT**—Separate beds, of course! Most people think donated blood is used only to help people who suffer traumatic incidences, such as accidents, burns or surgery, but in fact the vast majority of donated blood goes to people

with major medical conditions, such as cancer, heart disease, stomach disease, bowel disease, liver disease, kidney disease or haemophilia, or newborn babies and pregnant women. There are many possible different uses for blood donations. Blood donations may be made into lifesaving or life-improving medication for people with cancer, heart disease or kidney dialysis, or people with haemophilia who need it regularly or premature babies. It could be used in an emergency. By separating the blood into its components, it is possible to use a single donation to help save up to three lives. The previous government named 2009 the Year of the Blood Donor in a bid to encourage more Australians to give blood. I encourage them all. I especially encourage our parliamentarians to lead by example.