

NATIONAL DAY OF THANKSGIVING

Statement by Member for Southern River

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [12.57 pm]: I rise today to put on public record my support for the National Day of Thanksgiving, which has been part of our national calendar since 2004. The National Day of Thanksgiving falls on the last Saturday of May each year. The first National Day of Thanksgiving was launched by then Governor-General Sir Michael Jeffery, on 11 February 2004, at a special function at Government House in Canberra, with the full support of then Prime Minister John Howard. The National Day of Thanksgiving is now officially recognised at the highest echelons of our society, with official statements issued by our Governor-General, Prime Minister and federal Leader of the Opposition.

The National Day of Thanksgiving has its roots in the preamble to our Constitution which says, “humbly relying on the blessings of Almighty God”. It provides an opportunity for us as citizens and as leaders to acknowledge our Christian heritage and the blessings and freedoms we enjoy. Each year the organisers encourage a particular focus, and this year they are encouraging us to honour and thank those who are involved in local government, and those serving as chaplains. Today I want to put on record the excellent work done in our community by the 272 chaplains serving in our state schools across the length and breadth of our vast state, providing their services to more than 90 per cent of all schools, under the capable leadership of YouthCARE chief executive officer Stanley Jeyaraj. I encourage everyone to get into the spirit of the National Day of Thanksgiving and honour someone they know who is serving in local government or in a chaplaincy role.