

## Hillside

DEFENCE DIGITAL MEDIA



**NOT FORGOTTEN:** *Recognising Indigenous Australians who have served in times of war*

### Indigenous honour roll deserves recognition

MORE recognition is needed of the sacrifices made by Indigenous service men and women who have served their country in times of war, Mark Coulton (Parkes, NSW) has told the House of Representatives.

Thousands of Indigenous men and women served in the First and Second World Wars, but there was little acknowledgment of their contribution at the time.

“The involvement of Indigenous people in the armed forces was, in many ways, an exciting time, as they were treated as equals for the first time,” Mr Coulton said. “It was indeed unfortunate that, on their return, many people who had been comrades in arms could not celebrate together – that hotels had different areas for people of different coloured skin.

“Indeed, many Aboriginal people who returned from the war were quite devastated to find that not much had changed in the time that they had been away.”

Mr Coulton said while efforts are now being made to recognise the service of the Indigenous soldiers, help is particularly needed to maintain memorials in the country towns that many of them came from.

“Not only now but in 50, 100 or 200 years time, the residents of towns like Bourke will understand what a contribution their forefathers made, particularly their Aboriginal forefathers, who were breaking new ground,” he said.

“They represented their country in conflicts and should be remembered for now and evermore.” •

### Push for debt relief

THE federal government will investigate the viability of legislating to reduce the debt burden on heavily indebted poor countries following a private member’s motion in the House of Representatives.

The House agreed to the motion moved by Rob Oakeshott (Lyne, NSW) that the government examine the risks and benefits of bringing in debt relief laws similar to those passed in the United Kingdom in 2010.

The UK laws put a cap on the amount of historically-incurred debt commercial creditors can claim from eligible heavily indebted poor countries, reducing recoverable debt by 67–90 per cent.

“We have a precedent on the table in the UK parliament, where long and good work has been done and where consensus has been reached in building a model that sees UK aid dollars – much of it in the Asia-Pacific region – going to valuable aid programs to help countries participate in the modern economy and modern community rather than paying off debts to vulture funds,” Mr Oakeshott said.

The government now has until autumn 2013 to report back to parliament on the merits of adopting similar legislation. •

### Domestic violence clauses needed in contracts

PRIVATE companies have been urged to include domestic violence clauses in their enterprise agreements in a bipartisan motion passed by the House of Representatives.

Domestic violence is overwhelmingly experienced by women, around two-thirds of whom are in paid employment.

In moving the motion Amanda Rishworth (Kingston, SA) said domestic violence has a huge impact on the ability of these

women to do their jobs, whether through lost productivity because of anxiety and distraction or absenteeism because of physical and psychological injuries.

“Research suggests that women subject to domestic violence experience high levels of resignation and termination such that they are rarely able to sustain jobs on a long-term basis,” Ms Rishworth said. “They often have disrupted work histories, having had to frequently change

jobs either because they are coerced by their partners to resign or because they have unexplained absenteeism and reduced productivity that have led to termination.”

The motion recognised the positive impact of domestic violence clauses in employment contracts, which provide victims with additional paid leave and access to flexible working arrangements to limit the impact on their working lives. •