



NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard 24 May 2000, (article 31) Mr STEWART (Bankstown—Parliamentary Secretary) [5.20 p.m.]:

I bring to the attention of the House a magnificent story involving the Australian Hellenic Educational Progressive Association [AHEPA] which, during the past three years, has worked with the Olympic Co-ordination Authority [OCA] with the support of the Government to create a special sculptural tribute that is soon to be erected at the Homebush Bay Olympic Games site. This tribute will be an aesthetic interpretation of the famous ancient Greek sculpture Discobolus, a statue of a Greek discus thrower created by the ancient Greek artist Myron. The tribute has been created by the renowned sculptor Professor Robert Owen, who has been working on it for some time.

The tribute is a transformation of an ancient discus into a compact disc which has been thrown through the millennium—a great symbolism. The seven-metre discus will be inscribed with the history of the Olympics and a list of patrons, donors—at gold, silver and bronze levels—and a translation of the history of the Olympics in Greek on the bottom half of the discus. In the glass centre of the discus there will be inscribed a discus thrower going through the various stages of throwing, and this will be illuminated at night. It has cost AHEPA \$486,000 to bring this project to fruition. That money has been raised entirely by the Australian-Greek community as its tribute to the Australian Olympic movement and affinity with the Australian way of life.

Last Sunday I was fortunate to attend the dedication of an olive grove at the site of the Hellenic tribute on Stockroute Park, Herb Elliott Avenue, Homebush Bay, just across the road from the stadium. It is an impressive sight. The many olive trees which have been planted there have progressed well. On the outskirts of the site there are some cypress pines. The olive trees symbolise peace, harmony and nationhood, which are also symbolised by the goddess Athena. The cypress pines symbolise immortality. On that important day hundreds of people were in attendance to see the progression of the tribute. Helen Katsaros, representing the Supreme President of AHEPA, and George Lianos, the Grand President of the New South Wales branch of AHEPA, were in attendance. Mr Peter Manettas, the Patron of the Hellenic Tribute Committee, also attended, and I thank him for working hard to get the committee together.

Tasha Vanos, the chairman of the committee, has been a tireless worker and deserves much acclaim. Vince Xuereb, the vice-chairman of the committee, has worked extremely hard and involved me in the cohesion of the project by communicating with the office of the Minister for the Olympics. The Minister has been involved in this exciting project. Bridget Smythe from the OCA is to be commended for the hard work she has put into this project. Initially Bridget was a little dubious about the project; to raise almost \$500,000 was not an easy ask. This is a huge tribute; it has been done properly, so it will last forever. Bridget would be the first to admit that she was wrong. The Australian-Greek community has shown that it can work together to raise this money, because it has great meaning and symbolism not only for now but for future generations.

I also thank Ann Locksley, Director of the Public Art Advisory Committee of OCA. The team worked very hard and in partnership to bring this project to fruition. I am pleased to report that by the end of July or early August this project will be in place. The obelisk will be an impressive sight. All members of this Parliament will be proud of it, because it is a demonstration of the multicultural community that we have so long believed in. The symbolism of ancient Greece and the Olympic Games is harnessed on the Olympic site and the discus is thrown from the Olympic site, aimed at Olympia.