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MR D. PARKER

Mr BROCK (Frome) (15:37): Today I would like to talk about an icon of Port Pirie and that person is Des Parker. Des has been involved with the newspaper industry for nearly 70 years. He started by selling newspapers at the gate of the Port Pirie smelters at the start and also the completion of the site's day's work, bearing in mind that in those days there were two newspapers per day. He would attend school and then return after school to do the selling in the afternoon at the site.

He was delivering newspapers across the city as soon as he could drive and in those days there were no computer printouts to advise the driver who should be receiving the delivery, nor who may have been away on holidays. They just looked at a listing prior to the start of the delivery and then did the rest from memory. Des has recalled many incidents that may have happened or activities that he may have seen over the many years of delivering newspapers from motor vehicles across Port Pirie, but he has never divulged any names or issues.

Des has been involved not only in the newspaper industry but has also been heavily involved with many sporting organisations over many years. He has been in official positions for many organisations and is also a life member of many groups in recognition of his tireless dedication over the years. He has been very actively involved with taking photographs of sporting activities every weekend and has a very large number of sporting photographs from all sporting activities over many years.

He has been gradually cataloguing thousands of negatives over the past 20 years and has built up a great history not only of sporting events but also the large number of weddings from 1960 onwards, as well as historic buildings, both those that are still standing and many that have been demolished over many years. At one stage I know he had a large shed full of newspaper clippings from hundreds of events. He also has manuals of all activities that may have happened from areas across Port Pirie. He has done this by establishing the city into grids and has a comprehensive history of all events and incidents that may have happened within these grids.

Although Des is now nearly 80 years of age, his memory is still as sharp as a tack and he regularly receives calls not only from Port Pirie but across South Australia and nationally from people who may be looking for information about an event or a particular person who may have lived in Port Pirie.

Des may be asked about a particular person who may have lived in the city or passed away, and immediately he would say to the person asking, 'You're talking about so-and-so from such address.' He would then pass on the relevant information. All of this was from Des' memory, such is the man's ability.

Des was also secretary of the Solomontown Cricket Club at the age of 15 and was very instrumental in fundraising for this club. Des has been a great supporter of many community groups throughout Port Pirie over many years, but he has a special connection with raising funds and awareness for the cancer society across South Australia. The community has been very supportive of events that Des has been involved with, in particular when he has exhibitions not only of his many historical photographs of the sporting events but also personal memorabilia from over the last 70 to 80 years. At these exhibitions, the funds raised always go towards the community group fundraising for the events that they are involved with.

Port Pirie has been very fortunate to have a community person who is so passionate about his community, and Des Parker is certainly not losing any of his passion. Although Des retired from work many years ago, he is still actively taking interest in all events and still takes photographs at events on weekends for the local newspaper and also for his own collection. Des Parker, you are a legend.