

Ms ANDERSON (Macdonnell): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I rise tonight to celebrate a new book by John Strehlow, called *The Tale of Frieda Keysser*, which will be launched tomorrow evening at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs.

The author, John Strehlow, was born in Adelaide in 1946 and lived in the Northern Territory from 1972 to 1975. He is the son of Ted Strehlow, and the grandson of Carl Strehlow. His own personal histories, merged with the history of Hermannsburg Mission, ensured this book is a historical biography about the author's grandfather and grandmother, Carl Strehlow and Frieda Keysser. I quote here from the summary of the book:

Late in the afternoon of 2 July 1894, the Horn scientific expedition had reached the abandoned mission station of Hermannsburg 80 miles west of Alice Springs, and Oxford educated Baldwin Spencer, Professor of Biology at Melbourne University, later author and world expert on the Arrernte tribe, looked at its collapsing buildings and population ravaged by syphilis and dismissed the work of the mission as a mistake. 'The Arrernte would be extinct within 100 years', he predicted. Darwin's theory made this a foregone conclusion. The Australian Aboriginal was fated to vanish off the face of the earth. Three months later, Carl, now aged 22, arrived to revitalise Hermannsburg and prove Spencer wrong.

This is the story of Carl and Frieda's life together, their (inaudible), their triumphs, their sorrows and their joys. The tale of a man and a woman who had set out to make the impossible come true, and succeeded where others had failed, regenerating this broken community, despite the turbulence of the period, while bringing up six healthy children themselves. This is also a tale of strange experience for life was hard and often short and sometimes there was bloodshed.

The frontier age was passing, but the mission station remained cut off from the rest of the world. The railhead at Oodnadatta was two weeks buggy ride away and medical help non-existent. So they sent five of their children to Germany for the sake of their education. Although the drift to the telegraph station, the cattle stations and the railway line had begun, the Aboriginals were still largely nomadic. Blood feud killings were normal, and fights. The ancient tribal ceremonies lived on, and even those who converted had strange visions, receiving hymns from angels, they said, and much else they refused to disclose.

Through it all, Carl was opposed at every turn by Spencer, who did everything

in his power to discredit him. Being consumed with professional jealousy for (inaudible) understanding of the people he worked with. Carl had exhaustively researched every aspect of their lives and, in the process, came up with findings different from Spencer. These were published causing a thrill In anthropological circles in London, yet no matter how hard Spencer tried to destroy Carl, he continued from strength to strength. Most annoying of all, the Aboriginal population of the mission was increasing. Spencer's doomsday thesis was wrong.

I applaud John Strehlow for the enormous amount of detailed research which has grown into this work. I hope it corrects some of the misunderstanding and misinformation that has been spread over the years about the relationship between the missionaries and the Arrernte people. I am the product of grandparents who lived with the missionaries, and for that I am thankful. The missionaries left us with our culture, songs and history intact. They gave us the opportunity to understand and learn about the new world, with which we had come into contact. The missionaries gave us jobs and assisted us to travel for work, picking fruit, or shearing sheep. They also set up industries like the tannery at Hermannsburg. They gave us hope through faith, and many of us remain strong Lutherans today.

People who have only lived with Arrernte for a few years cannot understand the connection between the Arrernte and the missionaries. For those of us who grew up with missionary history in Central Australia, there is never a bad word said about the missionaries. We are still grateful for the opportunities they gave us.

This book provides a lesson for anthropologists, past and present. Anthropologists always need to be careful about assumptions they make, especially since there is often no-one except their peers who check their work. This book calls into question (inaudible) that have been written earlier about Hermannsburg. I hope that many Arrernte people show up for the launch tomorrow evening, and give John Strehlow encouragement. I congratulate Mr Strehlow, of the completion of a thorough documentation of a piece of our shared history in Central Australia. I hope and pray that this book helps correct the negative portrayals of the Lutheran missionaries, put forward over the years.

Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I take this opportunity also to wish my electorate a safe and happy Christmas, and I hope that everyone looks after each other. It is a time to spend with families, look after the children, look after the oldies, and have fun. But do not consume too much alcohol, and do not drive while you are drinking. Make sure you go to all the lovely waterholes that we have in the countryside, and take your families out there and look after them. Respect your country, and make sure that it is a time of giving, and a time of sharing with your family.

I take this opportunity to thank the Legislative Assembly, our Hansard staff, and the library. I take this opportunity now to thank my new colleagues, the Country Liberals, and thank Terry Mills, and also thank the government. As the member for Braitling said, we can throw rubbish across at each other while we are inside this House, but there are times that will come when we need to acknowledge each other and respect each other. The member for Johnston always says this is a place where we act, and pass legislation, but we need to respect each other, and I certainly do.

I say thank you to my electorate officer Kathy McConnell, and thank Kathy for the things that she does for me, and the friendship we have, and that will continue.

I take this opportunity to send a message to the people in Alice Springs, because there are so many people coming in from my electorate, and other electorates, to access services in Alice Springs. We just need to have that common courtesy for each other, common respect, and make sure that we look after the town, where we all access services.

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