

Legislative Assembly  
Southern Region Of The Sydney  
Woodturners, Guild Inc Hansard  
Proof  
Extract

06/04/2000



Southern Region Of The Sydney  
Woodturners Guild Inc  
Private Members' Statements

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**PRIVATE MEMBERS STATEMENTS**

**SOUTHERN REGION OF THE SYDNEY WOODTURNERS GUILD INC.**

**Mr COLLIER** (Miranda) [4.25 p.m.]: It is with great pleasure that I speak today about a group in my electorate, the Southern Region of the Sydney Woodturners Guild Inc. Wood-turning is an ancient craft. In simple terms, it is the formation of wooden articles using a lathe. While the piece of wood spins on the lathe the craftsman or craftswoman uses a variety of tools to shape that wood into items of use. The Southern Region of the Sydney Woodturners Guild currently has 200 members, both male and female, and its membership is growing. The guild began in the Sutherland shire in the late 1980s. Early meetings of the southern region took place with 20 or 30 members once per month at an individual member's home.

Growing numbers meant that by the mid-1990s members were looking for a larger place to meet. When it became aware that Sutherland council was about to demolish a derelict scout hall in Oyster Bay the wood-turners raised the funds, obtained materials and worked extraordinarily hard to fully restore the building. In February 1996 the wood-turners held their first meeting in the hall which they affectionately named the Cubby House. The wood-turners hold regular meetings at the Cubby House for members to exchange ideas and hone their skills. They also hold maxi-days once a month. Those open days attract 120 to 150 people to the hall, including members of the public. I have attended those meetings on numerous occasions and I thoroughly enjoyed myself, as did every other visitor.

Wood-turners do much more than meet the needs of their large and growing membership. The Southern Region of the Sydney Woodturners Guild, through their charity work, their fundraising, their commitment, their camaraderie, their craft and their sheer hard work, regularly make an unselfish and significant contribution to the wellbeing of the Sutherland shire, a contribution which richly deserves recognition. The wood-turners meet the recreational and social needs of a large and growing number of shire residents. Many of its members, both male and female, are pensioners or self-funded retirees. Membership is open to all ages. The wood-turners are well-organised and self-supporting in the funding of their activities, their equipment and their publications. Through their classes, demonstrations, displays, newsletters meetings and open days the wood-tumers provide opportunities for members to develop their skills and talents.

The guild conducts training sessions for new members in the Cubby House for a small fee, which includes the lathes, materials and 15 hours of tuition. They are committed to their craft and its long-term growth in the shire. They regularly invite craftsmen and craftswomen from other parts of Sydney, Australia and the world to demonstrate their skills, products and techniques to members on open days. Open days are relaxed and informal and provide opportunities for public displays and for members to exchange ideas and meet with one another. Wood-turners are extremely conscious of their environment. They fashion a wide variety of useful items using burls, which are dome-shaped, unwanted growths on fallen trees, wood offcuts and wood which has simply been discarded as waste. Their emphasis on recycling is simply commendable.

In restoring the once derelict scout hall at Oyster Bay, the Southern Region of the Sydney Woodturners Guild has, through its own initiative and members' hard work, returned a valuable asset to the community. The wood-turners have raised and spent more than \$15,000 on improvements to the hall since they first restored it and held their first meeting. This once derelict building, which has been marked for demolition by the local council, is now being used not just by wood-turners but by other craft groups on an average of 20 days a month.

Each and every year members of the Woodturners Guild make wooden toys and donate them to charity-the Salvation Army-for distribution at Christmas. In October 1999, using their motto, "charity begins at home", the wood-turners raised \$9,000 and donated that to the Rural Fire Service. In the year before they raised \$6,000 for the children's emergency ward at Sutherland hospital and I understand this year the woodturners will be raising money for other local essential services. Their contribution to the present and future wellbeing of my community has been simply outstanding from all points of view: community facilities, membership, the environment, their work for charities and fundraising for local services. I thank the southern region of the Woodturners Guild for its contribution to my community. I am proud to have such a group of men and women in my electorate of Miranda. I have taken the step of nominating the southern region of the Woodturners Guild for a Government community service award.

***The above statement is an extract from Hansard  
of a speech given by Mr. Barry Collier, MP for  
Miranda, in the Legislative Assembly on 6th April***

***Each member is allowed to address Parliament  
for 5 minutes on any subject.***