

Hello – my name is Thelma Thorne and I am the Treasurer of the Dharriwaa Elders Group.

The Elders Council of the Dharriwaa Elders Group first decided to erect this eternal flame in December 2008. We confirmed the wording again at our meeting of the 29 August 2009, and wrote to George's family asking them for their blessing after that.

I am pleased to see members of George's family here with us today.

This is not **just** an honour for our founding Speaker George Rose, the man. The idea is that this eternal flame will be a constant reminder to us of the values he stood for, and the reasons why he established with his brother and sister elders, this organisation.

It's to remind us of how much stronger we are when we work together in unity – and how to work for the community, not just for our own individual families or personal interests.

It's to remind us about courage, about how to stand up for what is right, even when it is dangerous and unpopular to do so.

It's to remind us about how important having a vision is – and how to inspire others with that vision to create new enterprises when they are clearly needed.

It's to remind us how to persevere until a job is done, concentrate on the details, even though they might be boring, because running organisations is about knuckling down to do the hard work when it has to be done. It's about being flexible so you can respond to things that happen in the community but also to the many demands of government and those we try to work with.

It's also to remind us how important it is to keep our culture and identity as Aboriginal people strong and healthy. And how important keeping alive language and other cultural knowledge is for our identity which we can all be very proud of.

It's also to remind us how important it is to constantly promote and sell what our organisation does, to those with influence and power, but also in the community. Keeping goodwill in our own community, and in government, for the Dharriwaa Elders Group is crucial to our survival. We won't get anywhere unless each and every one of us keep on telling everyone the good stories about the DEG, and spread goodwill for our organisation.

Lastly it's to remind us that we all need to keep our sense of humour – there is nothing that breaks the ice in a meeting with a politician or when we are all getting too serious than a good laugh and a bit of cheek every now and again. A good laugh reminds us that we are all equal and no-one is more important than anyone else – everyone is valuable and we can all share the warmth of a good laugh.