



Speech by

## Hon. Peter Lawlor

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

Hansard Tuesday, 27 October 2009

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**Williams, Mr L**

**Hon. PJ LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (10.18 am): I know I speak on behalf of everyone in Queensland's legal, business, sporting and racing communities when I say that the recent passing of Leo Williams is a major loss to our state. Leo's association with Queensland and Australian business and sport was as significant as it was long. He was not just one of Queensland's leading solicitors but one of sport's best administrators.

Leo represented Queensland at the highest level in three sports—rugby, swimming and water polo—and was pivotal in the success of many Queensland sporting teams. He was the chairman of the QRU during the Reds' golden years—some time ago now. He was also chairman of the ARU at the high point of Australian rugby in the early nineties. He then took over as chairman of the Rugby World Cup. One of the things that not many people know is that he relocated the head office of the Rugby World Cup to Dublin, and that saved that organisation many tens of millions of dollars. It was one of his proudest moments when he stood side by side with the Queen and handed John Eales the William Webb Ellis Trophy in 1999 at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.

In business he served as a company director for more than 25 companies across a range of industries including resources, sport, construction, media and hospitality. He also served as president of Tattersall's Club for several years, helping to build it into the strong and profitable club it is today. It was also his service to law, the community and sport that saw him awarded an Order of Australia in 1999.

Leo's contribution and involvement in Queensland horseracing will also be sadly missed. He really loved the horse racing industry and was heavily involved as a member of several racing clubs and owned several well-performing and many slow horses. His contribution to the industry was not only as a club member and horse owner but also as chairman of the Racing Appeals Tribunal for many years. I served with Leo on that tribunal for eight years. He was always a pleasure to work with. He will be remembered for his fairness and sympathy to the battlers who appeared before him. Above all, Leo was a great family man and a good friend. Our thoughts today are with his wife, Nancye, and children, Nicole, Paul, Anthony and Julienne, at this sad time.