




Speech by

Hon. John McVeigh

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

Hansard Thursday, 14 February 2013

MCGOVERN, MR D

 **Hon. JJ McVEIGH** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) (3.41 pm): This afternoon I rise to pay tribute to a great Toowoomba man and rugby league legend and stalwart, Mr Des McGovern. Des was one of our most enduring ambassadors, especially in the Toowoomba sporting community and rugby league circles. Des McGovern passed away recently at the age of 84. He was an integral part of Toowoomba's golden era of rugby league during the 1950s. His career included two Kangaroos tours, seven test matches and 15 games for Queensland. He toured as a winger with the Kangaroos in 1952-53 and in 1956-57. Des was also a member of the Toowoomba Bulimba Cup teams.

Des is remembered as a successful rugby league coach in country Queensland regions, particularly Toowoomba, where he coached the mighty Toowoomba Clydesdales. Des was a Darling Downs boy through and through. I am told by those who knew him best that for many years his potential as a lightning-fast winger was evident at an early age and anecdotes about his life experience as such were shared at his funeral.

Des went to Clifton State School and legend has it that his ability to dash down the sideline and dive over the try line was a regular occurrence. The only problem was that, as is typical of small country football fields, the start of the try line and the dead ball line was a very short distance and Des would end up sliding past the dead ball line and often hit the tin fence. Apparently, the imprint of his forehead can be seen all over tin fences on the Darling Downs because he scored so many tries.

As well as being a master coach Des was also a great rugby league brain, which included him working as a rugby league writer for the *Darling Downs Star* newspaper and the *Chronicle*. He was also the voice of rugby league on the Darling Downs, hitting the airwaves and calling the local games on radio station 4AK before moving to 4GR, 4WK and finally 102.7FM. Des retired from full-time commentary at the end of the 2010 season, aged 82.

Des is survived by his children, Barbara, Desmond and Margaret and their families, with whom so many families in Toowoomba, including my own, are friends. His funeral was held yesterday at Toowoomba's Our Lady of Lourdes Church on what would have been his 85th birthday.