




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Gold Coast Titans, Cartwright, Mr J and Searle, Mr M

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.33 pm): Today I rise in the House to pay tribute to the Gold Coast Titans founder, Mr Michael Searle, and foundation head coach, Mr John Cartwright. John and Michael have been key contributors to the creation, development and success of the iSelect Gold Coast Titans, which have established a powerful rugby league franchise in Australia's sixth largest city, the Gold Coast. With both Michael and John deciding to step down from their roles and integral positions with the club, it is only fitting to congratulate them on their overwhelming success with the Titans but also their true grit and determination to see the creation of a new club come to fruition all those years ago and grow into the success that they are today. Michael Searle will not only step down from his role as founder of the Titans but also his role as executive director of football when the current season ends. John will coach his last game on Monday night when the Titans take on the Roosters at Allianz Stadium in Sydney. He will stay on with the club in a non-football role.

John has been a model of community involvement throughout his tenure as founding coach and we thank him sincerely for his great dedication and personal investment in the Gold Coast. For Michael it all started back in 1999 and came to fruition on Friday, 27 May 2005 when David Gallop, then CEO of the NRL, called Michael and said, 'You're in the NRL competition.' This was the beginning of what is now the mighty Gold Coast Titans. At their home ground of Cbus stadium the Titans have given the Gold Coast some memorable moments, all thanks to Michael and John. As the Titans move to a new phase of administration we can only say thank you to these two men for their belief in the Gold Coast and their promotion of rugby league in our wonderful city.

On another issue regarding the Titans games and crowd numbers, I would like to see the Gold Coast City Council work with the Titans club to look at opening up the 16-hectare site behind the stadium for public car parking on game days which would open it up to hundreds of car parking spaces with access to the north of the stadium and alleviate congestion worries at the entrance to the stadium. I have advocated for this outcome from the day the stadium was announced, and to assist the Titans game day patronage this simple, low-cost solution should be trialled. It does not have to be a bitumen mass; it can be, as it was in Moore Park for many years in Sydney, just a mowed grassed area. It would be nice and flat. Unfortunately you would not be able to use it on wet days, but on other days it would provide a much needed car park for the Titans to increase their patronage. I want to personally thank both Michael and John for all of their hard work, dedication and commitment to the Titans and I wish them every success in their future endeavours, whatever they may be.