




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 4 June 2015

ADJOURNMENT

Appo, Mr G; Woof, Mr I

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (12.22 am): Tonight I rise to pay tribute to two late sporting champions from my electorate—Mr Graham Appo, aged 64, and Mr Ian Woof, aged 56—both recently laid to rest within the space of a few days. Both men made huge contributions to various sporting codes in the Gladstone area and their deaths are a huge loss to our community, to their family and friends and to the many they mentored through their significant involvement in sport.

First I speak of Mr Graham Appo, a proud Indigenous man, a long-term Gladstone resident and former Valleys Rugby League chairman. His unquestionable passion for the game of league was legendary. He exhibited high standards of morals and ethics in the game and was known to always set the bar at a very high height. It is largely through his dedication that Valleys Diehards Rugby League club will be able to celebrate its 100th season next year. When the club was on the brink of folding, Graham, together with his family, commenced the rebuilding task. With the 100th season celebration in 2016 on his radar, he had a hands-on approach and, wherever he had the required skills or knowledge, he would lead by example. He committed a huge amount of guidance and general assistance to both Valleys and Gladstone Rugby League together. He was a true and dedicated mentor. He commanded respect and heavily influenced many young people involved in Rugby League. Graham and his family dedicated more than 60 years service to the club, an enormous contribution that will possibly never, ever be matched. The club logo of Valleys is a tough, diehard figure—someone who is determined, loyal and devoted, and Graham Appo earned the right to proudly wear that logo on his heart. Sadly, he hung up his beloved Valleys jersey for the last time when he passed away at home on the night of 13 May 2015. A minute's silence was held on 16 May at 5 pm before kick-off of the Gladstone Rugby League A-grade Valleys versus Brothers game in honour of the club stalwart and his contributions to the game of Rugby League. Sincere condolences are extended to Graham's wife, Debbie, to his sons, Dave, Kevin, Steve and Scott, and to the whole Appo family.

The second blow to the Gladstone sporting community was the death of Mr Ian Woof, or 'Woofy' as he was commonly known, who died at the age of 56 following a prolonged battle with kidney disease. Woofy was born in Toowoomba but in 1969 relocated to Gladstone, where he became heavily involved in cricket and hockey in the roles of player, mentor and coach. He loved the water. He was an avid fisherman and sailor as well as a high-achieving sportsman. In his late teens he was an A-grade player for the Glen Cricket Club and Sparks Hockey team. He completed school in 1973 and gained entry into a carpentry apprenticeship and followed his trade for many years. In the eighties Ian's health began to fail and when he could not play sport anymore he coached and mentored youngsters for the next 15 years. The worst of Ian's pain, however, was undoubtedly the tragic loss of his son Luke in a car accident at the age of 17½ years. Luke had followed in his father's footsteps with his love of cricket and was awarded Yaralla Senior Sports Star of the Year in 2009, the year before his untimely death.