




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 21 April 2016

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Martin, Mr R

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.34 pm): On Good Friday, 25 March 2016, a good friend to all the Stevens family and my son Louis' best mate, Ryan Martin, gave his life to save a young girl in a horrific surf beach tragedy at Fingal Beach, just across the border from the Gold Coast in New South Wales. Ryan was only 30 years old and was a fit and competent swimmer who jumped into the water without hesitation when a little seven-year-old girl from Toowoomba was being dragged out in a strong rip, which would undoubtedly have led to her demise without Ryan's immediate intervention to keep her afloat until help arrived. Unfortunately, by the time help arrived to assist Ryan, he had succumbed to the devastating power of Mother Nature. Although efforts continued to try to revive Ryan, he died at the scene.

Ryan is the first hero I have known personally and I am in awe of his unselfish and brave determination to save that little girl without fear or second thoughts for his own safety. We shared a love of a punt, a Rugby tipping competition, the odd drink or two and his indefatigable smile would always light up the room no matter the result of our betting exhortations. Ryan was the quintessential Aussie good guy. As my wife and I enjoyed a jug of sangria with Ryan in a Barcelona cafe, we both could not help reflecting on what a lovely, fun-loving, easygoing Aussie Ryan Martin was. Besides the hundreds of people Ryan brought laughter, happiness and friendship to, his great gift on earth was to give his life to a seven-year-old girl who, I am sure, will go on to bring great credit to the life of Ryan.

Heroes are not born that way, heroes are not trained to be that way, nor will they ever know if they will get the chance to be that way, but we know that Ryan Martin died a hero. I will do everything in my capacity to ensure that Ryan Martin's incredible bravery is recognised, remembered and cherished for all time.

To Robin, Ryan's mum, and Josh, his big brother, my heartfelt condolences go out to them for the loss of their champion son and brother. Nothing will ever replace the loss of his presence in our lives. Ryan's life reminds me so much of a brilliant shooting star that shone so brightly for what seemed to be such a short time. As was said at his funeral service eulogy, Ryan Martin: forever young, forever a hero and forever in our hearts. Rest in peace, Ryan Martin.