




Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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ADJOURNMENT

Bowly, Mr R

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (1.48 am): Vale Richard Bowly Snr, late of Toowoomba. I take this opportunity to pay my respects and honour Mr Richard Beresford Bowly, late of Toowoomba, who passed away last Saturday, 12 March, aged 82. Richard Bowly was a leader and community servant who achieved much in his 82 years, including three separate careers: firstly, as an advertising executive in the 1950s; secondly, as a marketing executive with Carlton & United Breweries in the 1960s; and thirdly and finally, for the last 34 years of his life as a highly successful hotel owner and operator, first at Brisbane's Waterloo Hotel and from 1986 at Toowoomba's own Southern Hotel. It is in this capacity as the owner of one of Toowoomba's best hotels that I came to know Richard well.

Despite receiving a life-saving liver transplant in 1998, Richard remained an active and imaginative hotel licensee well into his 80s and continued to contribute to a wide range of community, charitable and industry causes at an age when most of us would be reluctant to leave the couch. Eighteen years ago, he was scheduled to die from liver disease until a last-minute miracle provided a liver transplant and gave him 18 more years of borrowed, productive time. He did not waste it. Richard used this time to good effect: chalking up 34 years at his Southern Hotel; making major contributions as a member of the board of the Mater Foundation; serving as a QHA divisional chairman and contributing a regular column to its industry magazine; representing the hotel industry on the Gambling Community Benefit Fund committee; remaining fully engaged in my Rotary Club, the Garden City Rotary Club; and, through his hotel and family, contributing to numerous charitable and community causes in his home town of Toowoomba. Such was his impact that Richard was made a life member of the QHA in 1998.

I will return now to Richard's career as a hotel owner and operator at Toowoomba's Southern Hotel. With the support of his family, he turned what was a modest and traditional drinking hotel into a local powerhouse of innovation, best practice and customer service and a highly profitable business which today employs more than 100 people and operates three satellite sites. Richard was an innovator with a canny ability to spot the trend before it arrived. For example, his hotel was one of the first to place quality food at the head of its product offerings, and today it is recognised as one of Toowoomba's premier food venues. He recently expanded the hotel to incorporate a separate and substantial coffee shop—fire+ice—attracting new customers and more families.

Always generous with his time, money, advice and heart, Richard Bowly set an outstanding example of tenacity, innovation, hard work and humility. Remarkably, at the age of 80, only two years ago, Richard was honoured as QHA's Hotelier of the Year for 2014. I will miss my friend Richard Bowly, and Toowoomba and Queensland will miss him also. I commend his service to industry and the community over a generous and productive life, and I extend the condolences of the House to his wife, Judy, and the Bowly family.