




Speech By
David Janetzki

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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ADJOURNMENT

Swannell, Mr P, AM

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (6.14 pm): Toowoomba legend, Emeritus Professor Peter Swannell AM, a beloved husband, father, brother and loved friend to many, passed away last month. His laudable achievements have since been hailed far and wide: inspiring Vice-Chancellor at the University of Southern Queensland; Visionary Chairman of the Empire Theatre; compassionate leader of the Toowoomba Clubhouse; erudite and witty columnist for the *Toowoomba Chronicle*. There was so much more to Peter than all of that. There was colour to his life and he brought colour to our lives.

Peter and I first connected nearly 15 years ago at Heritage Bank where I observed Peter, a trained engineer, cut through financial system jargon with a pure stream of logic. I think he enjoyed my wife's singing more than my conversation and we were privileged to be welcomed by Peter and Janice into their home for beautiful meals and celebrations, always with music and generous conversation. Peter was quite the raconteur, full of humour and warm intelligence, whether it be recounting how he and Janice met rehearsing the worst play ever produced or his intense hatred of most meetings and how the 700-metre range on which Toowoomba sits means most of what we say goes over the heads of those in the south-east corner.

On the day of his funeral, I spent time poring through old correspondence between us. There were three things that jumped out at me—his humour, his thoughtfulness and, although he was a very interesting man, his deep interest in others, a very rare combination indeed. That interest was what made his column in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* unmissable. He wrote regularly of politics. I joked with him that he was Toowoomba's own Antony Green. I even had the honour of appearing in a couple of his columns, thankfully favourably.

He described his politics as purple, an amalgam of red and blue. He cherished an old friendship with Labor luminary Bill Hayden, forged during their recovery work in Jindalee during the Brisbane floods of 1974. Being purple made him the perfect person to read my draft maiden speech and in his inimitable style he delivered typically frank feedback.

As we in this House know all too well, politics pulls us away from family and friends and so it was that I last saw Peter six months ago. He was sick. That colour he brought so effortlessly to every gathering was sadly fading. I took the chance to thank him for showing an interest in so many lives, including those of a number of my dear friends, mentoring and cajoling them; for so thoughtfully at my personal level entering my life and encouraging me, much more than what I ever deserved. I will never forget him, nor will anyone else who was blessed to share Peter's life and have some of that rich, animating colour run into their lives, too. God bless you, Peter.