




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2020

ADJOURNMENT

Greenslopes Electorate, Easts Rugby Union

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (7.09 pm): ‘Tiger for life’—that is the motto of the Easts Tigers Rugby Union Club, and these words are genuine. Formed in 1947 with roots going back to the early part of the last century, the club was originally an old boys team for Brisbane state high. Since then, countless people and families have connected with the club, becoming lifetime participants, volunteers and Tigers for life.

Let us just look at two great examples. The current president is Simon Box and his father was also a club president. Simon played in the premier grade side. He also represented the state and Australia in the under-19 teams. Simon played in these teams with his good mate and current premier grade coach, Moses Rauluni. I met Moses at the junior trophy day where he was giving out trophies. He told me with pride about starting in the club when he was just six years old. Moses also played in three Rugby World Cups representing Fiji.

If success was measured purely in top grade premierships, Easts might not be at the top of the list. However, if success was measured in bringing people to the sport, keeping them engaged for life, looking after existing and former members, expanding the groups playing to include women and people with disabilities, producing rep players at all levels, staying financially viable and encouraging people to volunteer and give back to the local community, then Easts is the premier rugby club in Queensland and I would have to say in the upper ranks of Australia and the world.

Their fourth grade premiership came just nine years after their founding in 1956, but they would have to wait a further 50 years until 1997 to achieve their inaugural premier grade premiership. Fast-forward to 2020—a year when many sporting codes struggled to get back on the field—and Easts did a lot more than get back on the field. Their juniors fielded over 1,000 players, making them the biggest club in Queensland, and their seniors won six out of six grand finals—the premier grade men, the premier grade women, the second grade, the third grade, the fifth grade and colts 4. The passion on display on and off the field at the premier grade grand final was a pleasure to witness, even if I had to witness it the day after the election. This passion is always on display at every home game, as generations of supporters gather to cheer on their teams.

Six grand finals would have brought great joy to Julie Laws, the late club manager who was general manager from 2009 until her untimely death earlier this year. I pass on my condolences to her family. Julie was a force in the club and a huge contributor to the success of the club. Whenever you rang Julie and asked for something to be done, it was done. Whenever Julie rang you and asked you to do something, it got done. If the ARU brought me on as a consultant to solve their current problems, I would be saying one thing to them: head down to Easts Rugby Union because there you will learn how to really run the sport of Rugby Union. 2020 has been a great year for the club. Whatever the trophy haul looks like in 2021, they will continue to be a great club and they will continue to produce Tigers for life.