




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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ADJOURNMENT

Searle, Mr T

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (7.23 pm): I rise to pay tribute to the late Tom Searle and pass on my condolences and deepest sympathies to the family, albeit somewhat belatedly. Tom sadly passed away in June this year after a long battle with illness. He was a pioneer of Rugby League on the Gold Coast and the Tweed Coast with his contribution spanning over half a century. As a player at Tweed Heads in 1972 and as captain-coach of the Seagulls, he took the side that finished last in 1971 to the grand final the following year.

Universally admired and respected for his knowledge and passion for the game, Tom made an immeasurable contribution to Rugby League and our region while also being adored for his kind and gentle nature. Tom was also part of the Gold Coast Titans, joining the club in its founding year as junior recruitment manager. Tom's funeral was held on Friday, 10 July at Piggabeen oval. I know that the celebration that followed at Piggabeen and then at the Seagulls is just what Tom would have wanted. Due to the complications of COVID-19 and the various challenges of border crossings, sadly I was not able to attend, but I was absolutely there in spirit.

I know the Searle family well. Tom's son, Michael, and I worked side by side as foundation directors of the Gold Coast Titans to secure the NRL licence. In part we were inspired by Tom, who was a passionate supporter of our bid to secure a national licence for the coast and, most importantly, to provide a pathway for Gold Coast juniors to play Rugby League at home at the highest level. I need to take a slight moment of indulgence. Players, particularly from my old school of Keebra Park—and while I was never an outstanding player, my nickname was Tangles back in 1977. I was the guy they brought on at the end of the game when we were assured of winning so I could not mess things up.

The legacy lives on in great players like Moeaki Fotuauka, David Fifita, Tanah Boyd, Alexander or AJ Brimson—and what a great player he has been for the Titans; it was amazing to be there at the last game this season to see his stellar performance—and past players like Jesse Arthars, Jai Arrow, Leivaha Pulu, Agnatius Paasi, Tyrone Roberts-Davis and Bodene Thompson. All are former students of Keebra Park State High School and have gone on to play at the highest level.

Tom was a great entrepreneur, a risk taker and someone who leaves a great legacy on the Gold Coast. I simply say to him: farewell. I am sure he is up there organising the next—

(Time expired)