




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Pegg, Mr D; Tarnawski, Mr J

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (7.21 pm): I rise to speak of a great man from my electorate who sadly passed away recently. Before I do that, I want to acknowledge the passing, as others have in this House tonight, of a colleague and a friend of ours, Duncan Pegg, and extend my sympathies to his friends and family and to his community, who are missing him deeply.

Last week I was invited to the funeral of an incredible local from my electorate, Josef Tarnawski, who passed away at the age of 93. His funeral really was a celebration of his life and his life really was one of a migrant story—one of resilience and tenacity and love for his family and for his community. Josef, or Joe, grew up in a very small and poor mountain village in Romania. He was conscripted to fight in World War II and, shortly after seeing firsthand the devastation of war, he fled, somehow making his way to his mother in a migrant camp in Maitland in New South Wales. He was just 23 years of age.

Joe moved to Brisbane where he became a fitter and turner at the Government Printing Office in George Street, but his real love was the game of chess. In a story with striking similarity to *The Queen's Gambit*, Joe was mentored in the game of chess as a young child of just 10 years of age by a shopkeeper in his local village who wanted Joe to play chess with his son. Joe fell in love with the game and it was on settling in Brisbane in The Gap that he was able to focus on this passion. He was a master at lightning chess, or quick chess, which imposes a five-minute time frame on the game, as if chess was not stressful enough ordinarily!

We know that Russia often dominates the international chess circuit, but on 6 October 1963 something really remarkable happened. The Russian grandmaster Alexander Kotov was touring Australia in a series of championship and exhibition tournaments. At the time Kotov was one of the world's top 10 chess players and he had been Moscow's champion in 1941, 1948 and 1950. It was Kotov's first tour to Queensland after an international lightning chess tour was announced. Earlier that day our very own Joe Tarnawski had beaten other visiting Russian chess players and suddenly found himself playing and actually defeating the world champion in Kotov. A *Brisbane Times* article quotes Joe as saying—

I never thought I would beat him ... All I wanted to do was play against someone better than me, so I could improve my chess.

There is really not enough time to pay tribute to Joe. He was a self-made entrepreneur, a philanthropist, a beloved husband, father and grandfather. In the ultimate act of kindness, he asked for donations in lieu of flowers at his funeral to be made to the Chess Association of Queensland to support women and girls in the game of chess. He will be missed.