




Speech By
Aaron Harper

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Record of Proceedings, 18 August 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Green, Mr P

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.33 pm): This one's for you, Greeny. Seven days ago Townsville and North Queensland lost a legend and it rocked us to our very core. Our Rugby League North Queensland Cowboys-loving community received the news that we had lost Paul Green, tragically to suicide, and I want to pass on my condolences to his wife, Amanda, to his children, Emerson and Jed, and to the extended Green family.

Greeny, as he was fondly referred to, was a true legend in North Queensland. After a successful playing career, he went on to become an NRL and State of Origin coach who of course coached the mighty North Queensland Cowboys from 2014 to 2020, and who can ever forget that historic win in 2015 with players like JT, Matty Scott, Coops, Feldty, Jake Granville, Morgo, Jason Taumalolo—that historic win which changed and lifted our city of Townsville and North Queensland for better and forever? We will always be indebted to Paul Green.

I have great memories of lifting Paul up at the airport and giving him the biggest man hug after they came home from that 2015 grand final win. He was always up for a chat, whether it was in the street, at a formal function or just bumping into him at the airport. That historic win will forever be Greeny's legacy. It led to our new stadium being built which the team calls home today and we attract more major sporting events and concerts. Paul was known for always helping and looking out for others, and we have just learned in the last couple of hours that his family have made the decision to donate his brain to the Australian Sports Brain Bank to help others.

Since 1995 North Queenslanders have shared the highs and the very lows with the team and we will never, ever forget what he did for us. I know this awful news has rocked many people—his many loyal friends, players, staff, sharing their immense sadness about how we lost Paul Green to suicide. I want to talk about mental health just for a moment. We need to do more to reduce the suicide rates, and, Mr Deputy Speaker Kelly, you know more than ever after doing that magnificent work. Let us implement all of those 57 recommendations.

When I heard the news I was completely gutted. It has been hard to get my head around how this happened, and no-one knows the answer to that. I had only just finished a meeting with Townsville Wellbeing Network talking about our mentally healthy city, talking about what our Townsville Suicide Prevention Network is doing to reduce rates and what we are doing about it as a community. That just gutted me. It took me straight back to losing some mates in my former career and just that incredible darkness for a couple of days.

Let us all make sure that we look after each other and do it better. We all hit rock bottom in our lives. It is how we deal with that, and we cannot do it alone. Our suicide rates are too high and we need to do more. As JT said recently, the days of saying 'she'll be right' are over. Reach out, check on your mates and get help for those who need it. I have been speaking regularly with Cowboys CEO Jeff Reibel

in the last few days checking in on how they are going, and we need to do more of this at these most challenging times. I know the club will do something special tomorrow night so we can all pause, reflect and share our grief together and celebrate what Paul Green did for us. It is time to wrap our arms around each other and our team. Vale, Paul Green.