




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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ADJOURNMENT

Kambouris, Mr G

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.01 pm): I rise to pay tribute to an outstanding member of the Chatsworth community, Mr George Kambouris, who recently passed away. He was a tireless advocate for many volunteer organisations in my local community. George will long be remembered for his strength of character, courage and as a fierce advocate for those less fortunate.

Born in 1963, George was the eldest of four boys. Every stage of his life was a first for both he and his family. When diagnosed with spina bifida, it was an uncommon medical condition in the 1960s. His family discovered that resources were limited to wheelchair education. They also faced the uncertainty that George may not live past 25. George did not let life in a wheelchair slow him down. He went out of his way to help others, despite spending considerable time in hospital undergoing many surgeries. He never stopped setting new goals for himself and maintained a high standard of fitness.

Despite his spina bifida, George was a multiple medal winning athlete. He represented Australia in power lifting, swimming, hand cycling, basketball and track. He never ceased to exercise, led a healthy life and constantly set new life goals. In 2000 he was inducted into the Greek-Australia Hall of Fame for power lifting. Later in his life he dedicated his time to helping others, particularly those less able. George became a mentor for young people confined to wheelchairs, helping them discover activities and sports. He became an ambassador for SpecialCare Central Inc. and subsequently founded the Living on Wheels program. This program allowed him to share his expertise of living with a disability. Participants could interact and learn valuable life skills to support disabled children in their day-to-day tasks and sporting pursuits. To quote George, 'If you are a wheelchair user it's easy to overlook exercise and fitness. Physical activity will help you acquire a more positive and healthier attitude towards life. This is my ultimate passion—to help others enjoy the same freedom in life as I do.' George supported the 1200kms for Kids cycling fundraising event between Sydney and Brisbane to raise funds for the Brisbane and Sydney children's hospitals. Even when he could not ride the entire distance George became a support vehicle volunteer to ensure everyone had plenty of water and food.

You cannot buy character: it comes from within. George had character in spades. George supported many community organisations during his life, including Para-Cycling Queensland and Rotary. He was a proud Rotarian, past branch president, past area governor and a Paul Harris Fellow. A few years ago I was privileged to attend his incoming Rotary branch president's dinner, and the look of pride on the faces of both of his parents was priceless. George Kambouris will be remembered for his zest for life and generosity of community spirit. My sincere condolences to his father Michael and family. Vale, George Kambouris, a life well lived.