




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GREGORY

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ADJOURNMENT

Burns, Mr M; Smallacombe, Mr B

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.12 pm): Tonight I pay tribute to two significant people in my electorate who recently passed. Many in this place would know Mike Burns, a dear friend of many and a dear friend of mine. Mike made a significant impact in the Central Highlands in agriculture, Rugby League and politics. Mike moved to the Central Highlands with his family in 1978 from Nanango, took up a position with a major seed company and later opened his own agricultural seed business called Fairbairn Ag. He was heavily invested in bringing new crop opportunities to the region. He loved agriculture and played a significant role to ensure we had competition in the market against the major seed proprietors, and many of the farming families across the Central Highlands thank Mike for doing so. He was heavily invested in bringing new crop, as I said. Mike also opened the very famous Fairbairn Bakery, which is still open today. If you want to taste the best pies in Queensland, you should try one from the Fairbairn Bakery. They have stores in Emerald, Blackwater and Airlie Beach. It certainly is worth having a crack at those.

Mike was also heavily involved in Rugby League in the Central Highlands as a player, coach and administrator. Mike never liked the accolades, but it would be fair to say that he was one of the driving forces for the Emerald Tigers, and that was evident at his funeral when the Emerald Tigers formed a guard of honour. Finally, he was my chairman of the Gregory SEC LNP and also that of the late Vaughan Johnson OAM. He was awarded life membership to the LNP for his services over four decades and he was a significant contributor not only to the community and to the Catholic Church but also to many communities around the Central Highlands.

I now turn to another pioneer for agriculture in the Central Highlands who passed away recently, Bruce Smallacombe. Bruce was a trailblazer when it came to manufacturing agricultural equipment. Based in Capella, Bruce was not just fixing agricultural equipment through his engineering business; he was also developing new, cutting-edge equipment to conserve moisture in the dry times of dryland farming. I remember him developing the paddle-pop machine which would scoop small mounds of dirt. Once it rained, those areas would retain the water, leaving a great moisture profile for those crops. Bruce was also instrumental in selling Australian-built tractors—the Phillips Acremaster, which was built in Western Australia. While unfortunately not being built anymore, it was well received in the early 1980s and was a significant part of developing the Central Highlands as a premium dryland cropping area, certainly around the Capella, Clermont and Emerald areas.

Both men played a significant role in my family's life but also in the lives of many people on the Central Highlands. It seems we are starting to see a lot of these pioneers of the Central Highlands pass away, but they made a significant contribution to the economic and social cohesion in the Central Highlands. Vale, Mike Burns and Bruce Smallacombe.