



Speech By  
**Michael Healy**


**MEMBER FOR CAIRNS**

---

Record of Proceedings, 25 June 2025

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Bastion, Mr RW**

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (11.44 pm): People from all over Australia recently gathered in Cairns to celebrate the life of a true tourism legend. Robert William Bastion's contribution to the tourism industry, not just in Far North Queensland but also across Queensland and Australia, remains unique and unprecedented. He was the consummate road warrior when it came to selling the Great Barrier Reef and a range of products from the Far North to the world.

Robbie gave up a milk and bread run and started working at the Queensland government travel bureau in Sydney, where his tourism journey began. He established many lifelong relationships in those early days, particularly with Todd Parker. In the late 1980s he moved to Cairns and started working in sales with the reef company Quiksilver in what would be described by many of us as the golden age of tourism in the Far North, with Max Shepherd and Mike Burgess. This marked the beginning of his world travels and the creation of an amazing network of lifelong friends and business contacts, not to mention amazing life stories.

Robbie was part of a small team that travelled extensively through the late 1980s and early 1990s, establishing the economic foundation stones for our region's success and building in the international market. He built genuine relationships, attending travel and roadshows and conducting trips himself. His establishment of the Paradise Found roadshow after the September 11 attacks in New York reflected not only his understanding of the industry but also his passion for it—unlike any other in Australia's international tourism marketing strategies.

He was an outrageous character at times and, like all of us, was not without fault; however, his acknowledgement of his own faults only appeared to endear him to his countless friends and colleagues. His wit and humour were powerful and opened many doors—and possibly closed a few. He loved a drink and a laugh and was a great lover of all sports. He was generous with his vast knowledge of the industry and helped many in the tourism industry over generations.

A skilled writer, an avid reader and an acknowledged author, he spent many years feeding his quest for knowledge, visiting museums and libraries around the world. His writing skills were reflected in his annual email to the world summarising international and domestic politics, sporting events and social happenings. They were not just humorous but often studded with pearls of wisdom.

With his recent passing he leaves behind countless friends, and the tourism industry in not just Queensland but Australia has lost a true legend. Our thoughts and prayers go to Gail, Jesse and James, Robbie's five exquisite grandkids, and Vicki. Vale, Robert William Bastion. He was a good man.