



Speech by


## Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard Thursday, 27 October 2011

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### WILLIAMS, MR K

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (3.27 pm): In the small hours of Wednesday, 19 October, Keith Williams, the 82-year-old trailblazer of Queensland tourism, passed away after battling ill health and a series of strokes. Queensland's tourism industry lost a visionary leader and entrepreneur when the final curtain was drawn on the life of Keith Williams.

Larger than life, this unforgettable man never took a backward step and would see opportunity, development and jobs where others would just see hurdles and enormous risk. Keith Williams encapsulated the bold spirit that helped put Queensland tourism on the map internationally. His drive and vision were legendary, as was his persistence and single-mindedness in pursuit of his goals.

His achievements included building the first canal on the Gold Coast in the 1950s. In 1957 he started the Surfers Paradise Ski Gardens in the Nerang River and was Australian waterski champion in 1959. Keith staged the World Waterski Championships on the Gold Coast in 1965. After borrowing everything he could, Keith opened Sea World on the Gold Coast in 1971—and what a wonderful attraction it has proved to be, still bringing smiles to millions of visitors and locals alike as they are entertained.

Then in 1975 Keith became the inaugural chairman of Gold Coast Tourism and in 1979 he was appointed chairman of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority and began work on the Gold Coast Seaway. One has to wonder, if Keith was in his prime and still with us today, how he would feel about the state the Broadwater has been allowed to deteriorate into, neglected by this toxic Bligh Labor government.

Resorts on Hamilton and Daydream islands in the Whitsundays followed, and many years later he built the highly controversial Port Hinchinbrook development in North Queensland. In January 2011 he was presented with the first Gold Coast Legend Award for the city's Australia Day celebrations.

Tributes and memorials have flowed in for Keith. To a bloke who started out with nothing as a postman and created so much joy and pleasure for others, I say: thank you and vale, Keith Williams. You are a legend.

*(Time expired)*