



Speech by

Hon. Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard Thursday, 14 February 2013

WALTON, MR C

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (2.42 pm): On 23 December the Currumbin community lost a true friend, a pioneer of sustainable living, a family man and a visionary. Fifty-four-year-old Chris Walton's life was cruelly whisked away from him when an awning collapsed in James Street, Burleigh, as he was walking underneath it. This was no canvas awning, this was a solid metal verandah that, in a freak instance, tore loose without any warning and crushed Chris. His wife is up in the gallery with us today. Kerry, this is hard for me too. Despite efforts from countless bystanders who rushed to his aid, Chris could not be saved. It is widely said that Chris alerted others of the imminent accident and pushed them away, taking the brunt of the blow himself when the awning collapsed.

Chris's full and active life was celebrated by family, friends and business colleagues at a deeply moving ceremony held at our Currumbin RSL on the banks of Currumbin Creek on Friday, 4 January—a fitting meeting place to farewell a dear friend. Eulogies recalled the deep love he had for his wife, Kerry, and son, Fin, his zest for life and his reverence for the earth.

But in Currumbin Chris will be remembered most for creating the multiaward winning Ecovillage in our beloved Currumbin Valley and for immersing himself in all aspects of our community. Chris had a career in property development which, in some ways, was at odds with his obvious love of the land.

I remember meeting Chris and Kerry some 10 years ago, soon after they had secured land for this vision, the Ecovillage. They were holding open community consultation on site. This might sound normal, but it was a first for a private developer. I was immediately impressed by this inclusive nature and infectious enthusiasm to take the local community along with him on this journey to produce an extraordinary way of living in harmony with nature.

I have enjoyed my many visits over the years to witness the village's progress and the friendship I formed with Chris and Kerry. The subsequent development application for the Ecovillage was the largest ever submitted to the Gold Coast City Council. There were many challenges to face Chris along the way, but he never lost his passion or his vision. He ploughed on sourcing and storing used and recycled materials that fostered sustainable development every step of the way.

His close friend Martin Jackson summed it up: Chris modelled a zest for life with a boy scout's enthusiasm, an ability to be present and lead with his heart. He was the best friend a friend could have—loyal, engaged and generous.

As I said, the Ecovillage won a long list of prestigious awards, but all of these paled into insignificance compared to the adoration Chris had for his wife, Kerry, and son, Fin. May he live long in our memories and in our hearts. Today I say valed Chris Walton.