



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Tate, Mr Brent**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 19 June 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

## SPEECH

**Date** Thursday, 19 June 2014  
**Page** 6821  
**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Jones, Ewen, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr EWEN JONES** (Herbert) (12:48): I checked the papers this morning and it is true: New South Wales won again last night, clinching their first State of Origin rugby league series in eight years. And last night we saw the probable end of the stellar career of Queensland player Brent Tate. Brent Tate came to Townsville at the end of the 2010 season after having ruptured his anterior crucial ligament in a test match for Australia. He was absolutely distraught at that time because he thought his career was over. I do not think anyone who saw him in the dressing sheds after that test match would have thought he would work his way back to play for the Cowboys and for Queensland, including man-of-the match performances, and also the Australian side that won the World Cup last year and the Four Nations in 2014.

Brent Tate has played nearly 250 games for the Broncos, the Warriors and the Cowboys. He played 26 tests, and last night was probably the last of his 23 State of Origin matches. He is married to Lani, a beautiful girl and a fantastic netball player—she plays for the Magnetic Steelcats in Townsville—and they have two beautiful kids. Last night's injury will be his fourth knee reconstruction.

A good friend of mine, Wayne Nicholson, is a fellow auctioneer in Townsville. He is very close to the Cowboys. Brent Tate is very special person. I am trying not to make this sound like a condolence motion, because he is not dead. He did not die; he has just done his knee. Nicho, as Wayne Nicholson is called, has a very special place in his heart for Brent Tate. Brent Tate is a fierce competitor. He shares a room, when he travels, with Gavin Cooper, and Gavin Cooper says he is angry at absolutely everything when they travel. But to see him with his wife and his kids you know he is a truly gifted human being.

When he came to Townsville he was still undergoing very heavy rehabilitation for his knee and he made himself available to the Cowboys corporate team. I was doing some work for the Cowboys at that time and hosting pre-match events and those sorts of things where you would break out the player who was injured. Brent would come out. I would interview him. He would say a couple of things and say g'day to a couple of people. Brent Tate would not leave there until he had signed every autograph and until he had a beer and a chat with everyone who wanted to have a beer or a chat with him. He is a tremendous corporate personality and a tremendous corporate citizen.

My son Andrew and I go to every home game of the Cowboys. Our favourite player at the Cowboys is Ray Thompson, who plays hooker and halfback. But Brent Tate is always a special person because you know that, off the field, he is this a lovely bloke, but when he goes on the field he is so angry. He will do many things after football, and I hope he will come back and play for the Cowboys. One of things he will do after he retires from football is speak to people, especially in business, about what it is to commit. Those of us in business understand that when you are doing cold calls or knocking on doors commitment is the ability to keep on going. When Brent had his third knee reconstruction he said that if they wanted him to do 150 squats he did 150 squats, because if he could not make it back he did not want it to be his fault. He wanted it to be because he could not possibly do it. So he dotted every i and he crossed every t. He made every session. He never complained. People in the business world or in the political world must remember that people do this.

Whether in the sporting context—where people make sure that their rehabilitation is done correctly—or in the political context, where parliamentarians make sure that we see everyone in our electorate, there is so much that we can learn from a bloke like Brent Tate. I heard him speak recently. They asked him about his first State of Origin match. He came off the bench and he ran onto the field. He said that it is absolutely true that the crowd noise dies down as your heart rate goes through the roof and you go onto the field. He ran onto Lang Park and his heart stopped and he thought, 'O my god, I'm playing State of Origin.' It is at that moment that you realise just what a kid he is and what a gifted player he was.

He has overcome a series of injuries. He had a terrible neck strain. He does not have a neck injury; he has a very simple neck which will get out of position and hurt the nerves in his arm. All he has ever wanted to be is a professional footballer—from the moment he was four years old and first saw it on TV.

He learnt under the tutelage of Wayne Bennett. He has been a fantastic citizen for Townsville. He has been a fantastic addition to the Queensland Cowboys. I do hope he comes back and plays again. He is an inspiration for absolutely everyone but he is also very proud of his wife and family. I want to make sure that he knows that football is football but life goes on and he will play his part. I think the House.