



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Lemarseny, Mr John, Lemarseny, Mrs Margaret**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 1 December 2016**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Thursday, 1 December 2016	<b>Source</b> House
<b>Page</b> 5276	<b>Proof</b> No
<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> Thistlethwaite, Matt, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

**Mr THISTLETHWAITE** (Kingsford Smith) (10:50): I wish to pay tribute to two giants of the Coogee community and surf life saving, John and Margaret Lemarseny, who passed away recently. John 'Lemo' Lemarseny showed a keen interest in surfboard riding from a young age. In the 1950s, he and his best mate and later champion paddler Ted Cahill would sneak into the Coogee surf club early in the morning to use the boards in the surf—until they were eventually caught by club captain Kevin Grant. After giving them a dressing-down, Kevin suggested that the pair put their skills to good use and join the club. The rest is history.

A giant of the surf, and a Coogee legend, Lemo would dominate surf boats throughout the seventies, eighties and nineties. A powerful and skilled sweeper, Lemo took the Coogee reserve grade crew to a gold medal at Blacksmiths Beach in 1972. He also swept the crew to branch, state and Australian gold medals in the open boat in 1982, winning the Aussies at Moana. That crew went on to represent Australia in the test series against New Zealand, and Lemo was given the honour of being the Australian club captain. He was a fearless competitor who would charge head-on into any surf, no matter the size or power. He was particularly well known for his skill and bravery on a wave ski whenever massive swells were breaking around Wedding Cake Island off Coogee. Every Sunday, no matter what the conditions, he and his mates Crazy and Shortie would head out and catch waves off Wedding Cake Island.

Lemo was president, club captain, boat captain and a life member of Coogee. He was a very well-known local legend who will be sadly missed. He was also a person who personified the motto 'Work hard, train hard, play hard'. He was a bit of a larrikin who loved a beer and was renowned for his parties at Coogee. Paul Leary told the story of a day when they were coming home from a surf boat carnival. The crew were in the boat while it was being towed across Sydney Harbour Bridge. That is nothing unusual about that for boaties—except that they were all in the nude! That is typical of Lemo and many of the Coogee surf club guys at the time.

Lemo had a wonderful partner in Margaret, who also passed away this year. Margs, as she was known, was lovingly the mother of surfboat crews in Coogee. She was a champion in surfboat sweeping. She spent many years supporting squads in the club. John and Margaret were well known for their hospitality and warmth at their home in Coogee. May they rest in peace.