

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We gather today to honour and celebrate the life of **Vivian Richard Forbes**—a man whose journey through this world was marked by resilience, intellect, conviction, and determination. Viv was not just a geologist, economist, farmer, and writer—he was a pioneer, a patriot, a husband, a father, and a man of deep principle.

Viv was a member of the ***Silent Generation***, known for its strong work ethic, loyalty, and traditional values. They were hardworking, stoic, and rarely asked others for help. Viv embodied these qualities throughout his life. I recently found out that he had still been slashing grass at the farm only a few days before he went into the hospice. His weight was so low that he wasn't heavy enough to push in the clutch on the tractor. He had to get Mum to lean on it with him to get the tractor into gear - which sounds incredibly dangerous. God knows how he stopped the tractor!

Born on April 9, 1939, in Warwick, Viv entered the world during a time of global uncertainty. His birth name was **Vivian Richard Watt**, the son of Albert and Jessie Watt. Tragically, his mother Jessie passed away from tuberculosis when Viv was just six months old. He was cared for first by his grandmother, Grannie Watt, and his aunt Vera Erhardt, before being adopted at the age of two by his father's sister Mabel and her husband Edward "Ted" Forbes.

Ted, who had longed for a son but was unable to have more children due to illness, became the only father Viv ever knew. With this adoption, Viv gained an older sister, Hazel, and many of Hazel's children are here today or watching online. Together they were raised on a dairy farm in Wheatvale, west of Warwick.

Viv's early years were filled with the hard work and simple joys of rural Queensland. He remembered harvesting wheat with his grandfather's steam traction engine,

picking corn by hand, feeding pigs and chooks, and learning to waste nothing. He was fascinated by machines and even tried to build a steam engine with farm tools—an early curiosity that would later blossom into scientific inquiry.

Dad told me that one of his earliest memories was watching long convoys of American troops passing through Warwick on their way to support General MacArthur, who was setting up his headquarters in Brisbane. At that time, the Japanese were bombing Darwin, their troops had crossed the Owen Stanley Range, and they were looking across Torres Strait at Australia. Japanese submarines had entered Sydney Harbour. Most of our soldiers were in the Middle East, with thousands dug in for the siege of Tobruk.

During those war years, Australia shipped most of its surplus butter, wool, and meat to Britain. They were also the years of ration cards—for food, cigarettes, petrol, and clothing. Farmers were forbidden to kill their own livestock for food, and everything was in short supply. On their small dairy farm, the Forbes family produced milk, cream, butter, vegetables, lucerne, hay, wheat, barley, and sorghum, while raising pigs. Draft horses consumed much of the crops, and the cows got the rest. **They wasted nothing.**

Life on the farm was sadly marred by tragedy. When Dad was just 12 years old, his adopted father Ted was killed in a farming accident—blackening out while ploughing and being run over by the tractor and plough. Tragically he survived more than a week with horrific injuries before passing away in hospital. This devastating loss left Viv, his sister Hazel and his mother Mabel in a precarious financial position. She invested all their savings in hopes of generating income, but every investment failed.

Viv remembered times when they didn't have enough food to eat. Yet through it all, he remained determined, resilient, and focused on his education.

He attended Wheatvale Primary School, where he was dux, and later Warwick State High School, where he again graduated as dux in Grade 12. He excelled in physics, chemistry, geology, mathematics, and English, winning the Science Prize and an Open Scholarship—placing him among the top 25 students in Queensland. This scholarship allowed him to attend The University of Queensland in 1957, where he studied Applied Science, majoring in Geology. Throughout his life, he also pursued studies in economics, politics, climatology, and soil science.

Viv's university years were marked by both academic achievement and personal growth. He worked odd jobs to support himself, including gardening and farm labour, and spent vacations working in mining camps. He was practical, resourceful, and deeply committed to learning—not just from books, but from life. During university holidays, Viv would hitchhike from Brisbane to the Northern Territory to work in mining camps at Rum Jungle and Batchelor. Hitchhiking was a task for the hardy in the late 1950s, and Dad said that sometimes he would camp on the side of the road for up to two days waiting for the next car to come past.

In 1958, Viv was called up for National Service and joined the Queensland University Regiment. He rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant before being discharged in 1959, when National Service was disbanded. During that time, he shared a house in Toowong with Jock McRobert, who is here with us today. Viv would often give Jock a lift to drills on the UQ ovals, the two of them riding down Sir Fred Schonell Drive on Viv's motorbike. Dressed in their army greens and slouch hats, Jock balanced a .303

rifle in each hand while gripping on with his knees. It must have been quite a sight. In fact, I only surrendered that very .303 to the gun shop earlier this year.

When he graduated, he went to work for the Geological Survey Office, a government department charged with the geological survey of Queensland. They would spend six months in the field and six months in the office drawing up geological maps. Over five years, Dad and his team mapped the area from Collinsville to Roma.

They had no GPS instruments, Google Maps, mobile phones, calculators, computers, or digital cameras—just pens, pencils, erasers, protractors, rulers, slide rules, aerial photographs, compasses, measuring tapes, and theodolites. Yet they produced geological maps that are still the basis of our understanding of the geology of central Queensland today. Those were the days when the government actually did something useful.

In 1962, Dad was sent to do mapping in Nebo near Mackay. Without permission, they set up camp near a waterhole with a fleet of Land Rovers and tents for a stay of months. When the property owners rode up and asked what the hell they thought they were doing on their land, they managed to clear up the miscommunication and were allowed to stay. They worked six days per week and spent Sunday afternoons playing tennis at the homestead. This is where Dad met my mother Judy, who was the head stockperson on the cattle property.

In 1963, Viv and my mother, Judith Anne Bell married in Mackay at the age of 24 and 22. Their marriage was a true partnership of 62 years - built on mutual respect, shared values, and a love of adventure.

The Geological Survey Office had paid Viv's university fees, and in return he was contracted to work for them for five years. Dad was never suited to conform to the rules of bureaucracy, so five years and one day later, he resigned.

He was offered a job as a geologist working for United Uranium at El Sherana near Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. At that time, it was a ghost town with several hundred houses and a population of just two geologists and their wives.

One of Dad's first jobs was to do a geochemical survey along the Alligator Valley. He knew next to nothing about geochemistry, but immediately bought a textbook in Darwin, read it at night, and applied it during the day.

Not long after, Mum found herself pregnant with me. Two weeks before I was born, they made the long trek to Darwin for my birth. Mum stayed at the Country Women's Association Hostel, while Dad slept on the beach outside Darwin with their dog. After I was born, they returned to El Sherana for Christmas 1966 boosting the town's population to five.

Other jobs in the Northern Territory and a stint in Sydney followed before Viv and Judy settled in Brisbane and Dad was employed as a financial analyst for Mount Isa Mines. Not long afterwards, my sister Lisa was born, and we lived together in a little house in St Lucia that Dad had purchased in the early 1960s for £6000.

During the 1970s, Dad first became involved in politics. He and Mum set up groups like *The Workers Party*, *The Foundation for Economic Education in Australia*, *Taxpayers United*, the *Progress Party*, and helped establish organisations such as the *Council for Resources and Energy* and the *Australian Defence Association*, among many others long forgotten. Many of his friends and supporters from those days in politics are with us today as well.

In a condolence email I received from Gina Rinehart, she reminded me that it was Dad who had originally come up with the first Boxing Kangaroo image as the logo for Taxpayers United in 1975. It was then used by Alan Bond as the symbol for the 1983 America's Cup and is now used by the Australian Olympic Committee. If only Dad had taken out a copyright on that image!

But both Mum and Dad loved the bush, in 1974 they bought 160 acres of scrubby land near Fernvale and called it *Malabar*. The property adjoined a national park filled with lantana, wait-a-while, and dingoes. Without plans, approvals, electricity, or registered builders, they designed and built their own pole house. Using only an axe, chainsaw, petrol-powered auger, crowbar, shovel, and a little old grey Fergy tractor, they built with second-hand corrugated iron walls and windows from demolition yards. It was a little cool in winter though as we only ever finished three of the four walls.

We spent every weekend there for over 12 years, cooking with a wood-burning stove. This time taught me so much. Although towards the end, I sometimes preferred give the farm a miss, so I could sneak into the Regatta Hotel with my mates, I learned invaluable lessons from those years. I discovered I had the confidence to build and fix anything. It also taught Lisa to be the fabulous cook she is, because she quickly worked out that if she was cooking a great meal, it got her out of picking up rocks in the hot sun.

During this decade, Mum supported Dad in every sensible and every foolish thing he did. Together they stood as political candidates, wrote hundreds of letters and press statements, spoke in many half-empty draughty halls, endured abuse and received praise. When Dad was running for election, he told me that Mount Isa Mines,

although secretly approving of his political views, were too cautious to publicly endorse them. His solution was simple: he would resign from MIM the Friday before the election, then front up on Monday morning and ask for his job back.

This approach worked for a long time, but in 1983 he was retrenched from MIM. Yet without searching, opportunities seemed to find him—mainly through people and contacts he had made during his years in politics. Dad began consulting in the coal business, in financial analysis, and in project management, as always learning most of it on the job.

So job followed job over the years—South Blackwater Coal, Comada Energy, Territory Resources, Kevin's Corner Coal, Austral Coal, and Stanmore Coal. Dad wrote notes and gave lectures on mining investment analysis for the Securities Institute at the Stock Exchange.

One role he relished during those years was serving as corporate head in charge of Terang, the large cattle property on which the South Blackwater Coal Mine was situated. No one in the company except Dad knew or cared anything about cattle breeding, and he was pleased to take on the responsibility. Mum and Dad grew to like, know and trust the station manager, Russell Kennedy, and his wife Jacqui. They visited regularly, helped with musters, and tried to keep the peace between miners and cowboys.

In 1990, Mum and Dad decided to abandon the city altogether and bought a real farm at Rosevale. *Sherana* was their home from 1990 to 2017, and it formed some of my happiest memories of Dad when the family visited from Hong Kong to spend time on the farm.

It was there that they began breeding Braford cattle before turning their attention to Damara sheep. They played a key role in promoting Damaras as hardy, low-maintenance sheep suited to Australia's climate. Damaras are hair sheep—they shed naturally, requiring no shearing—and are valued for their meat quality and resilience. Their flock became one of the pioneering flocks in Australia, helping to establish the Damara breed outside its native southern Africa. Viv and Judy were recognised as *Life Members* of the Damara Sheep Breeders' Society of Australia, reflecting their long-term contribution to the breed's development and promotion.

In 2017, Mum and Dad “retired” to Hilltop, a 40-acre farm near Ipswich. They kept breeding sheep up until only a few weeks before Dad went into the hospice. I think in retirement Dad was still working harder than many people do in their careers!

Dad was also the founder and guiding voice of the *Carbon Sense Coalition*, dedicating the last decade of his life to that cause. He saw how little science was being consulted in the growing climate debate. Through this work, he reminded us that carbon is not a pollutant, but the very foundation of life.

Viv spoke with conviction, arguing that carbon dioxide is essential for plants, for agriculture, and for human prosperity. He challenged governments and communities to see beyond the fear raised by the climate alarmist cult, urging practical solutions for energy, farming, and industry. His message was simple yet profound: warm, carbon-rich times have always been “Golden Ages” for life on planet Earth.

Through *Carbon Sense*, Viv gave voice to farmers, miners, and everyday Australians who recognised carbon's vital role in sustaining livelihoods. His legacy is one of courage and clarity—a man who stood firm in his convictions and sparked debate across the nation.

Viv's legacy is not measured only in the organisations he built or the arguments he advanced, but in the example he set. He showed that one individual, armed with conviction and clarity, can stand against prevailing opinion and still be heard. He demonstrated that science and farming, industry and advocacy, can be woven together into a life of purpose—proving that integrity and vision can shape both community and country.

Professionally, Viv's career spanned geology, mining, investment analysis, and farming. He worked for the Geological Survey Office, Mount Isa Mines, Gold Fields, Utah Development Company, and many others. He helped map the Bowen Basin, contributed to the development of major coal mines, and served as Executive Director of Burton Coal, where he led a small team in transforming a prospect into a profitable mine. He was good friends with Lang Hancock who considered Viv to be one of the world's leading experts in Coal Mine valuation and operation.

He was also a passionate political thinker and commentator. Viv was deeply involved in the Workers Party, the Progress Party, and other libertarian movements. He stood as a candidate for the Senate, wrote hundreds of poems, articles and letters, and founded the Carbon Sense Coalition and the Saltbush Club. He challenged conventional wisdom on climate change, energy policy, and government overreach—always with scientific rigour and moral clarity.

He was awarded the *Australian Adam Smith Award for Services to the Free Society* in 1988, and his writings appeared in the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, *Business Queensland*, *The Spectator* and mining publications around the world. Dad's political agitation continued right up until the month before he died when he had a long article

published in The Spectator. He was a voice of reason, a defender of liberty, a passionate advocate for free enterprise and a tireless champion for truth.

But beyond all his achievements, Viv was a man of deep personal integrity. He believed in hard work, self-reliance, and the value of family. He taught his children - Lisa and I, our partners - Katie and Andrew, and his grandchildren - Matthew, Isabelle, Jenny, Jessica, Angie, and Lucy - to think critically, live honestly, and never waste a moment. He was a gardener, a beekeeper, a poet, and a teacher. He built fences, dug postholes, milked cows, and wrote essays on the carbon cycle and the importance of soil. He lived close to the land and close to his values.

As I sorted through the photos on Dad's computer, one thing stood out: in every picture of him, he was either working or caring for, or simply playing with animals—dogs, sheep, goats, llamas, and calves. His life, captured in those images, was inseparable from the creatures he tended and loved.

One other interesting thing I found when clearing up his desk was a faxed press release from 2004 to the Minister for Mines and Energy which had a header: "When the time taken to get the permits to mine, exceeds the time needed to extract the minerals.....it is time to emigrate!" I cannot see that things have improved in the last 21 years and I guess Dad has now emigrated!

As we say goodbye, let us remember Viv not only for what he did, but for who he was—a man of principle, a man of vision, and a man of heart. His legacy lives on in the land he loved, the ideas he championed, and the family he cherished.

An ancient Greek proverb says that – A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in. Dad was certainly planting trees until the day he died!

Rest in peace, Dad. You have travelled far, and you never travelled alone.