



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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COUNCILLOR TOM PYNE

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (11.08 p.m.): I rise to pay tribute to a very big man in Cairns, that is, Councillor Tom Pyne, the Mayor of Cairns. It may be that some members of this House already know that Councillor Tom Pyne is to retire from local government at the next local government election in March 2000. In fact, in Cairns last Friday night, we paid tribute to Tom Pyne. We recalled his early years and his long years of service to the community and, in the process, through the excellent efforts of Ted Elliott and other administrators of the Youth Assistance Fund, we raised \$25,000 towards scholarships for young people to further their careers and to provide better opportunities for them as they face the world of the new millennium. But tonight is indeed a time to talk about Tom's time—a long time, as he is now a man of 65 years of age who has served in local government since 1961—38 years—during which time he has seen many changes.

Tom was born in Babinda, south of Cairns, in 1935. He was the youngest child in a family of five. He was from a country family. Tom left school at the age of 14 and served some time in the Army. In 1961, at the age of 26 years, he was elected as a divisional councillor to the Mulgrave Shire Council. It was in 1976 that Tom became Deputy Chair of Mulgrave Shire, and 1979 when he took over as Chair of Mulgrave Shire. His contribution to what was known as the jungle shire speaks for itself, but in 1995 he took on the very difficult position of Mayor of the new amalgamated City of Cairns. This was an amalgamation of the former City of Cairns and Mulgrave Shire.

The last four years have probably been the most challenging years for Tom, but there is no doubt that he has indeed measured up. Since 1997, he has been President of the Local Government Association of Queensland. There is no doubting Tom Pyne's devotion to the far north. There is no doubting his ability to balance the common touch, his ability to stay in touch with the people of the far north, to remain accessible to them and to be able to communicate easily and freely with them whilst at the same time looking for the best and most sensible opportunities for development in the region. At the same time, Tom has always protected that precious environment which we have in the far north. The physical environment of the far north is one of its advantages in attracting tourists to the region. Tom's ability to balance all these forces is one of the things that we most respect about him.

It must also be recorded that Tom Pyne was one of the visionary small group of people in Cairns who fought hard for local ownership of the Cairns Airport—another milestone in the development of Cairns. It is important to recognise that Tom's excellent service to the people of the far north has been assisted by the support of his family. I refer in particular to his wife, Marion, a lady of style. His children, Joanne and Robert Pyne, are also active in community affairs.

One of the amazing things about Tom Pyne is his ability to face things head-on during difficult situations. He has always found a sensible and practical way forward. Tom's book was released at our tribute function on Friday night. The book is called "Up Front—the Tom Pyne Story". One of the things he says in his book is—

"If I could do one thing more while in office it would be to introduce compulsory positivity throughout the community and relegate those vocal 'nervous nellyes' to the dinosaur scrap heap."

Tom speaks the truth with regard to the far north. It is an area of great promise and great opportunity. Tom Pyne has led us in the far north with determined positivity, with a face to the future and with the courage to provide the type of leadership of which other communities only dream.

All of us in Cairns—even though at times we have disagreed with Tom Pyne—must pay tribute to him. A man could give no more to a community than Tom Pyne has given to Cairns and the far north.
