



Speech by

Mr D. BRISKEY

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

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MR J. GRIFFITHS

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (11.41 a.m.): I rise to pay tribute to the passing of John Griffiths, better known to his mates as Griffo. Griffo was not only a constituent but also a valued member of Queensland's Emergency Services and the scouting movement. Griffo worked at the Cleveland Ambulance Station and was an ambulance officer for some 35 years. Sadly, his life was cut short by an aggressive brain tumour, but Griffo's legacy will long be remembered by the QAS and the people whose lives he has touched.

He would have turned 57 on 19 April and is survived by his wife, Mary, and children, Gerard, Laura, Matthew and twins Kieran and Lachlan. Griffo began his professional life of dedication to serving his fellow man in 1968 by joining the seminary at Banyo to train as a priest. He devoted himself to this and enjoyed his time there, but almost two years later it was the seminary priests who decided that Griffo's chosen career was not his calling, since he had also developed a bit of a reputation as a larrikin.

In 1968 he also joined the Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade as an honorary bearer at the Nundah station and eventually applied for and was appointed driver bearer to the St George QATB ambulance centre in 1977. Griffo's outstanding career helping others and saving lives will never be forgotten. He was a paramedic receiving 10-, 20- and 30-year uniformed QAS service medals. He also received a national medal and two clasps signifying his long service.

In keeping with his great community spirit, Griffo also joined the Raby Bay and later Victoria Point Air Sea Rescue, and he and his wife, Mary, became the crew's first aid officers for a number of years. Griffo's community work did not just stop at the Ambulance Service. He was also very well known and regarded in the scouting movement not only in the local area but in other places around Queensland where he served in various capacities. His scouting life started as a cub at Coorparoo, but most of his involvement was in the Redland shire. This year marks approximately 34 years of service to the scouting movement in Queensland, and I am quite sure anyone involved with the scouts or rovers in the Redland shire would certainly have heard of John Griffiths.

In 1992 he was presented with a medal of merit, one of the highest accolades for exceptional service to scouting. He also attended five major jamboringals and put his talents to good use by organising and running the medical centre at the camps. By all accounts, Griffo was a brilliant man and right up to the end he was always thinking of his scouts and rovers.

In speaking with his friends and work colleagues, he was widely described as gentle and caring and a wonderful teacher. His colleagues tell me of his special gift and capacity to care. He always took the time to build understanding, build trust and build relationships. He was a real community man with great compassion and a dedication to friendship.

He was also a great inspiration to the many young people he was involved with, and his interest in the welfare of young people and their development was reflected in the way he led them as a mentor and a friend. His workmates tell me of the time when there was little or no formal training in the QATB, and Griff in true professional style sorted out his own professional development opportunities through the Princess Alexandra Hospital and local Redland's medicos. It was this commitment to learning that was put to great use in innovative and pioneering

programs such as the Redland's pre-hospital defibrillation program—a first at that time in Queensland.

He will be remembered as a man dedicated to his career, constantly furthering his broad skills and knowledge for the betterment of his patients. In 1982 Griffo entered the Institute of Ambulance Officers (Australia) National Competition and in his first year of competition won the national titles against very strong national opposition. Prior to this victory, Queensland ambulance officers were considered by some interstate officers as little more than highly qualified first aiders, but Griffo was part of a team that put Queensland on the map professionally and his contribution will not be forgotten.

But where he shone was his ability to share his knowledge, his skills and his way of understanding patient care. Griffo shared his wealth of experience that no textbook could ever teach. One of my favourite stories about him is that Griff didn't attend to an 80-year-old with chest pain; he always attended 'Mrs Jones ... She is 80 years of age and has pain in her chest.'

John Griffiths was a true leader and will be remembered with respect and fondness by all who knew him. My condolences go to Mary and the children. Griffo, you will not be forgotten. Thanks, mate.