



Speech by

Mike Horan

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CONDOLENCE MOTION: DEATH OF HON TJ BURNS AO

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (11.12 am): I would like to join my colleagues in the House in giving my condolences to Angela and her family and also paying respect to someone who, whilst on the other side of politics, we admired for his commitment to his party but particularly his commitment to the people of Queensland. Having a debate with Tom Burns in this parliament could at times be ferocious, but he also always came at you from the front and he was a person who I admired particularly because of his absolute commitment to his cause and to his team. Like Tom, I led a party of 11 in opposition and I understand only too well the commitment that he gave and the sacrifices he would have made to his family. He always showed a lot of courage in that time, and I certainly admire him for what he did during that particularly tough time for his party.

People have talked about his larrikin attitude. I would like to recount one thing that is so typical of Tom. When I was elected on 18 May 1991 it was my son's 21st birthday and the following day he was playing for the Queensland Reds against Fiji. I went into the dressing-room at Ballymore after the game and we celebrated those three occasions in the traditional Queensland footballers way of drinking a yellow can in what they call torpedo style. Unbeknown to me a *Telegraph* photographer snuck in and snapped me. I thought it was the end of my political career because an article duly appeared in the *Telegraph* that week. Two weeks later I was sworn in here—a very serious moment. I thought the incident was behind me but, as I was being sworn in, Tom Burns sang, 'I can feel a XXXX coming on.' I did not know whether to laugh or cry but it was typical of his attitude.

As I said, he was a great member of this parliament and he did a lot for Queensland. There are a couple of things that I want to place on record with regard to Tom Burns. One is the sincerity with which he applied himself to the daylight-saving issue. He was very genuine in what he did. Because of the travels that others have spoken about, he understood regional and rural Queensland and he fought that issue and he won that issue. Thanks should be put on record today on behalf of the people of Queensland who needed that support.

I also believe that he had a wonderful, old-fashioned courtesy about him. As a minister, he would write to us if he was coming to our electorate. You always got that letter sometime before, and I know he passed that practice on to those who worked for him and who followed in his footsteps.

The third thing that I want to put on record is his contribution to the show society movement in Queensland. He worked for many years as an honorary steward at the Ekka. When he came into government he continued to support the 114-odd shows of Queensland through the continuation of the show society's Showground Capital Works Subsidy. That was a system that allowed many show societies to build buildings and public facilities from toilets to grandstands to cattle stalls and so forth. It was very important to the show society movement. He never forgot where he came from and he continued to support that system. I think the show society movement would be forever grateful for what he did. Along with others in this House, I would like to pass on my sympathies to Angela and her family.