




Speech By
Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Hon. JI Cunningham

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.06 am): I wish to associate myself with the contributions made in this debate by the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the member for Bundaberg and in fact all speakers who made a contribution as this parliament represents and remembers the life of former member for Bundaberg Nita Cunningham.

Condolence motions in the first sitting week of a parliament bring with them a special sense of poignancy. The days of the ceremonial commencement of the Queensland parliament are days to cherish and to remember. They are days to reflect on what has been gained and what has been lost. They are days not so much for each of us as members of this place; rather, they are days to reflect on the extraordinary nature of our state's democracy. They are days to share with those people who have given so much to enable each of us to take our seat in this House—our family, our friends, our party, our supporters and our volunteers.

If the opening of the parliament is the alpha of our lives of public service, then a condolence motion is the omega of our careers. For all of us, Nita Cunningham's life is an example of how we might conduct and distinguish ourselves as we span that period between the beginning and the end of our public lives.

Nita Cunningham was a good and decent person. There was a very deep wellspring of kindness in her heart. I remember Nita Cunningham because she unfailingly treated everyone she met with courtesy, with kindness and with respect. This view of Nita was repeated time and time again at her funeral in Bundaberg which I had the privilege of attending. Most of all, Nita Cunningham was a very fine representative of the people of Bundaberg. Nita was a passionate and tenacious fighter for them. She loved her home town and spent every day of her time in public life—as a councillor, as mayor, as an MP, as a minister—trying to make Bundy better, trying to improve the lives of the people of that great Queensland city. Nita was driven to deliver for her city and for her region.

In my view, Nita's greatest public achievement as a state MP, so eloquently described by the new member for Bundaberg, was the Paradise Dam. Nita used her first term in parliament to advocate for the dam. In her second term, the Labor government of which she was a part, led by Peter Beattie, committed to constructing the dam. And in her third term Nita got that dam built.

Surpassing all of this was her devotion to her husband, Elvin, and perhaps her greatest pride and her greatest achievement, her children, Anne and Glen.

If we can say at the end of our careers that our political party remembered us as loyal and devoted servants, that the community for which we worked remembered us fondly and with respect for what we were able to achieve, and that our family remembered us for our unstinting love and devotion, then our lives of public service, like Nita Cunningham's, will have had meaning and will have been well lived indeed.