




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 6 May 2015

ADJOURNMENT

Livingston, Mr J

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (10.03 pm): I rise tonight to speak about former Kirwan State High School principal Mr John Livingston, who passed away today. I also acknowledge the kind words today of the member for Surfers Paradise, the former minister for education, with regard to John. I am very aware that the former minister and John shared the utmost respect for each other. I also acknowledge the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, who visited John only two weeks prior to his death and also knew John very well when he was a former minister for education. I thank the minister for that.

John Livingston was a giant among educators. He was a visionary and a leader who helped shape education across this state. He led his school as a principal in the days of Leading Schools, the first step in school based management, and led one of the first schools in the state to become an independent public school. John also pioneered the formation of a high school on Palm Island which has now become known as Bwngcolman School, a P-12 school.

The Kirwan State High School student population swelled to over 2,000 students. While John did not necessarily know the name of every single one of his students, every student knew and respected John Livingston. John Livingston is Kirwan State High. John was a colleague, mentor and friend to every principal in North Queensland. His passion for Kirwan State High has always been immeasurable. When speaking of his beloved school, John's eyes would light up, his smile would be broad across his face and his chest would swell with pride. He loved everything about his school, from the Rugby League team to the instrumental students, from the academic achievers to the vocational students.

I had the pleasure of joining John on an international tour to South Korea in 2007. While on tour he was a great ambassador for Australia but, more importantly, he continued to reflect the values of Kirwan High. I remember on one occasion on the tour a group of 20 Australian educators were catching the underground train in Seoul in South Korea. John patiently waited for all to alight and then let others board the train. Within 30 seconds of arrival the train was due to depart and, subsequently, the doors started to shut, with John still on the platform. I was a much sleeker version of the man you see today, and I managed to duck out through the doors in time to join John on the platform. As we both watched the train disappear into the dark tunnel with our colleagues, I asked John why he had not jumped on the train with the rest of us. His reply was typically John: 'I was making sure everyone was on board.'

I am sure I speak on behalf of all educators who have worked with John when I say that he has been a good friend. It was good fortune knowing John and good working with John. I am a better teacher, a better principal and a better person because of John Livingston. John Livingston was, above all, a gentleman and a scholar.