



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 30 August 2016

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Ayliffe-Chung, Ms M and Jackson, Mr T**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (8.58 pm): On behalf of the residents in my electorate of the Burdekin, I would like to express my deepest sympathies to the family and friends of both Thomas Jackson and Mia Ayliffe-Chung and all those who have been affected by last week's horrific stabbing at a Home Hill backpacker establishment. I can say that this incident has certainly rocked our small Burdekin community to the core. Whilst police investigations are ongoing in relation to this incident, I do not wish to make comment regarding the reasons for this horrific double murder. However, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the tragic loss of two young lives and the families whose lives will be forever affected.

Certainly the townsfolk of the Burdekin, and in particular Home Hill, are still trying to come to grips with this senseless and tragic loss of two lives. Mia and Tom were backpackers who had come to Australia on the trip of a lifetime and, as many backpackers do, they travelled around Australia. They ended up at Home Hill, where they were picking local fruit and vegetables on our farms in the Home Hill-Gumlu area. Unfortunately, that dream came to a sudden end a week ago. Tom Jackson, who passed away today in the Townsville Hospital, was hailed as a hero because at the time of the incident he made a very courageous attempt to save Mia's life. As a consequence he suffered horrific wounds which he succumbed to late today. There were a number of other people who were also reportedly injured coming to Mia's aid who have since been released from hospital. With the alleged attacker currently in custody we are yet to determine the underlying reasons for the attack; however, that will come out in time and I have no doubt that justice will be served.

I would like to praise the work of emergency response personnel who attended the scene at Shelley's Backpackers at Home Hill, the Red Cross support services supported by the department of communities, Mayor Lyn McLaughlin and her fellow Burdekin shire councillors and the kind people of Home Hill who have opened up their hearts to assist traumatised backpackers by cooking meals, donating food and essentials, offering emergency accommodation for displaced backpackers and generally providing comfort during this distressing time. Backpackers and visiting tourists have always been welcome at Home Hill, and it is partly because of the inviting friendliness of the locals that they return. I know there have been church services and public meetings, and there is a sense of disbelief in the community today following the loss of Tom Jackson. My condolences go out to both families, who are now coming to Australia to conduct funerals. Rest in peace, Mia and Tom.