




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 17 February 2016

ADJOURNMENT

Pope, Mr M

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (3.01 am): Yesterday was a very sad day for my neighbouring electorate of Whitsunday. They suffered a terrible bus accident and also a boating accident which saw the loss of two lives. I would like to pass on my condolences to the member for Whitsunday and to his electorate.

On 12 January this year, the Mackay community lost an amazing man, Mick Pope. His sudden death has left Mackay in mourning. Known as the 'ideas man', Mick Pope was a larger than life, vibrant character who was instrumental in making the Mackay Airport Beach Horse Racing Festival an international attraction for the region. Word got out quickly of Mick's passing and tributes began flowing immediately from all over the region. It was clear from the hundreds of Facebook posts from people of all ages that Mick had an unstoppable passion and belief for Mackay and will be truly missed by the community. Mick was the kind of man who would make good things happen. He was known far and wide for his ability to draw a crowd and raise money for many worthy causes. Once Mick put his mind to something, there was nothing that would stand between him and the success of his idea.

Mick also had a private side. He did numerous generous acts for the community that nobody ever knew about as he did not go around looking for accolades. Even after his death the legacy of Mick Pope and his vision for the Mackay Airport Beach Horse Racing Festival will live on. His partner, Chrissy, his friends, colleagues and the Mackay Regional Council are determined that this year will be bigger than ever. The Mackay Airport Beach Horse Racing Festival is one of a kind. It is an event that shot quickly to the top of Mackay's must-do activities. This event and the success it has brought to Mackay would not be possible without Mick Pope and his tireless contributions to our community.

Drawing over 7,000-plus people to the Mackay Harbour Beach, the Mackay beach horse races have become an exciting spectacle, offering visitors a great opportunity to experience some famous Mackay hospitality and weather. The race day is regarded as the No. 1 social and sporting event on North Queensland's calendar. Mackay's tourism industry has Mick Pope to thank for this wonderful achievement. Mick's idea to have beach horse races has inspired a multitude of other ideas such as beach polo and an air show, showing that his legacy will well and truly live on in our community.

There was no rule book in Mick's life. He made up his own. He was brave enough to always throw caution to the wind. He truly lived life to the fullest. Thank you, Mick, for reminding us to do the same.