




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

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ADJOURNMENT

Local Government Elections

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (8.21 pm): I rise to pay tribute to some retiring local government representatives in the Burnett and Bundaberg region. I pay respect to retiring Mayor Mal Forman, who has made the personal decision to step out of public life to focus on his health and his beloved wife, Joy, and family. Mal has spent 14 years serving our community, with the last four as the Bundaberg Regional Council mayor. Under his leadership, Bundaberg council has played a major role in projects worth \$180 million that will unfold across the region in 2016. These include projects of the magnitude of Rubyanna Wastewater Treatment Plant, the gas pipeline, Knauf Plasterboard and the multi-use sport complex. These projects do not happen without hard work such as Mal has put in.

In his local community Mal is the patron of four local organisations and serves as a director on numerous boards. He is the current chair of the Wide Bay Burnett Regional Organisation of Councils, enabling him to promote our region to state and federal government decision-makers.

When elected mayor in 2012, Mal Forman promoted a platform of economic stimulus for the region. No-one could have foreseen the 2013 flood and tornado disaster that disrupted the lives of so many people in our community and slowed down the progress of the vision of growth for the region. With the major flood and mini tornado events, council faced a huge financial task simply to ensure infrastructure was repaired. The recovery came at a cost to council's reserves of some \$20 million. We look forward to seeing the financial position in which Mal has left the council. Mal Forman can be proud of council's response in the wake of the flood disasters and subsequent consultations to address community concerns about flood mitigation issues.

I am privileged to pay tribute to Councillor Tony Ricciardi, who retires at the forthcoming elections as representative for division 2 in Bundaberg. Councillor Ricciardi has been in local government since 1992. He served as deputy mayor of the former Isis shire council and became deputy mayor of the amalgamated council in 2008. Tony is an active member of his local community and served as president of the Childers Apex Club from 1986 to 1987 and remains a senior member in the Childers club. Tony is a life member of the Forest View Aged Care Facility and patron of Bundaberg Rugby League. Tony has served as council's representative on the Burnett Mary Regional Group. His work after the floods should not be underestimated.

I also pay tribute to Danny Rowleson, the councillor for division 6. He has worked hard to improve the quality of life across the Bundaberg region and has made an unbelievable contribution. Danny was instrumental in ensuring the protection of shorebirds and in other areas of environmental protection. Danny has supported council's decision to reduce council's electricity consumption, decreasing council's carbon footprint. With our iconic and endangered nesting sea turtles coming ashore to nest along the local coastline, Danny has continued to oversee turtle-friendly lighting installed in sensitive areas. Danny lives with his wife, Rhonda, and we wish them all the very best.