




Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2017

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: SIMPSON, MR GL**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.16 pm): I rise to add my personal support and that of the entire opposition, the LNP, to the condolence motion moved in respect of the late Gordon Simpson, the former member for Cooroora. Gordon Simpson was a friend to many. He was a stalwart of the National Party and the LNP and he was certainly free with his advice.

Gordon Simpson was also a visionary, a fighter and a doer. Long before the word became fashionable, he was an innovator. He put his stamp on the Sunshine Coast and left his mark on Queensland as the member for Cooroora from 1974 to 1989. That seat was very different from the Sunshine Coast seats we know today. It was a vast seat that enveloped the contrasting contours of the Sunshine Coast, from the Noosa North Shore to the Maroochy River and from Imbil to Montville on the Blackall Range.

Gordon Simpson instigated the landmark abolition of death duties in Queensland and the removal of sandmining leases at Sunshine Beach. He made a weighty contribution to Noosa's first town plan, banning high rises and safeguarding the Noosa Spit from development. Gordon carried a passion for the environment. It impelled him to drive the expansion and protection of the region's national parks, especially the Noosa National Park. Yet he trained an eye on progress and he had the deft, hands-on skills to plan responsibly.

A natural engineer, he resurveyed the Eumundi-Cooroy rail route, persuading the government to take up the lower cost and lower impact route which remains in use today. His diligence realised significant savings in construction and ongoing operational costs. Much to Gordon's pride, the impacts on people and communities were also greatly reduced.

Gordon was an early agitator for a university on the Sunshine Coast. He heralded it during his maiden speech in this place in 1974. While it took another two decades, the now highly successful University of the Sunshine Coast did open its doors in 1996, becoming Australia's first greenfield university since 1971. As the driving force behind the Nambour Hospital, Gordon Simpson put the coast's first base hospital on the map and he wrangled government investment in many more local infrastructure projects, schools among them, and the Sunshine Coast's first TAFE.

He was a former wheat and sheep farmer from the challenging Victorian Mallee. Gordon was, as much by necessity, a fervent innovator. His design and construction of a revolutionary tractor saw him anointed an honorary member of the Agricultural Engineering Society in Victoria. Then in 1969, like so many Queenslanders, Gordon and his wife, Norma, saw in Queensland and the Sunshine Coast the perfect kind of frontier match for his work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit, with of course lifestyle benefits.

They arrived with their young family of four—farmer Gordon working in dairy, beef and tropical sea production before growing sugar at Yandina. Gordon and Norma were pillars of community service. They supported countless organisations over the years, and for Gordon only ill health soon after moving to Buderim early last year began to curtail these activities. Unsurprisingly, Gordon Simpson fought long and hard against the prostate cancer that would ultimately claim his life. As his daughter Fiona, the

member for Maroochydore and who is family to many of us here today, has reflected, Gordon never retired. He just kept going with care and concern for others right to the end. On behalf of the opposition, I wholeheartedly support this motion and we extend our condolences to Fiona, Bruce, Helen, Jock and Gordon's loving wife, Norma, the loving family of the much loved Gordon Simpson.