




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 16 May 2019

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Kippin-O'Connor, Ms VA

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 am): I rise on behalf of the entire opposition to express our sincere condolences to the family and friends of Victoria Kippin-O'Connor, known as Vicky, member for Mourilyan from 1974 to 1980. As the Premier noted, today we are joined in this House by family and friends of Vicky, including Liz, her daughter; Geoff and David Cox, her brothers; Anita Lethbridge and Sue Faulkenhagen, her sisters; Ella, Daniel and Bradley Keough, her grandchildren; Cheryl Cox, her cousin; Skye, Bradley's partner; and many friends, including Elizabeth, Richard, Jacki, Alessandra, Robynn, Shirley and Lorna. As has also been noted, Lorna was the wife of Vicky's campaign manager. She said to me 'My husband was actually the campaign manager, but I think I did most of the work', which I think is quite often the case. It is lovely to have so many friends and family in the gallery here today.

It is indeed an honour to stand in this place and remember the great legacy of Victoria Kippin-O'Connor, the first woman from the National Party to be elected to any Australian parliament. She was the first non-Labor candidate to represent the seat of Mourilyan, winning the seat on two occasions.

Vicky had a country background and was a voice for rural and regional Queensland. As has been noted, she was born in the North Queensland town of Ayr in 1942 to parents Vivian Henry Cox and Enid Parry, nee Trower. She grew up on a grazing property in the Burdekin district. Before entering politics, Vicky was a foundation student at the University College of Townsville, the forerunner of James Cook University. She later worked as a secondary school teacher at several schools including Fairholme College in Toowoomba.

Vicky co-managed cattle properties and a transport business in North Queensland. It was here that she was taken under the wing of Edna Cunningham, the mother of Jacki, who is in the gallery today. Edna Cunningham encouraged Vicky to attend her first political party meeting. She went and, of course, the rest is history. Vicky's experience prior to being a member of parliament stood her in good stead to provide a rural and regional voice for Queensland. She was not a career politician, but she was passionate about bridging the divide between the north and the south of Queensland to ensure that everyone had the same opportunities. Vicky played a prominent role in the redrafting of major legislation relating to vital issues across regional Queensland. Those included electricity supply, the commercial fishing industry, education, family welfare and land tenure.

Vicky was also dedicated to changing society's view of women. Vicky believed it was vitally important for society to support women with children and backed the introduction of kindies. The views that she shared in her first year as a member in this House coincided with International Women's Year, which was declared by the United Nations in 1975. Vicky addressed the difficulties experienced by the

beef and sugarcane industries, and the need for repairs and upgrades to the Palmerston Highway and the Ravenshoe-Mount Garnet Road in North Queensland. Vicky was a strong woman who paved the way for females in politics. In her maiden speech in parliament she said—

As one of the few women to have been elected to this State Parliament, I am deeply conscious of the responsibility I have, not only to my party colleagues and my electorate, but also to the women of Queensland.

Following her departure from politics, Vicky remained a very active member of the North Queensland community as a councillor on the Johnstone shire council. In 1984 she became administrator of the Northern Australia Development Council. Vicky remained active in primary industry organisations and was president of the Zonta Club in Innisfail. Vicky also ran her own PR business and still found time to grow bananas.

Vicky was the loving mother of Robert, now deceased, and Liz and the beloved wife of Shane O'Connor, also deceased. I take this opportunity to place on record the thanks of the Liberal National Party in Queensland for the many years of service Mrs Vicky Kippin-O'Connor gave to this House and the Queensland community.