




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Russell, Ms J

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.11 pm): A couple of weeks ago we lost a great champion in Western Queensland. Jenny Russell was truly a product of this country and spent her life working for regional Australia and the beef industry. Born and raised in Blackall, Jenny was educated by correspondence at the family property renowned for its Santa Gertrudis stud nation-wide, Swan Hill, before leaving for boarding school at Stuartholme in Brisbane. It was this upbringing and being a part of a family of six children that shaped Jenny into the practical, astute and formidable woman that she became. Not only was the beef industry her passion; she also advocated for the bush.

In 1995 Jenny was elected vice-president to the National Party here in Queensland. Jenny was smart, approachable and hard working. By taking on this position, Jenny became a ground breaker. Decades before the fashionable discussion on gender equity, Jenny was simply leading by example. Her training, experience and practical nature made her a leader. This leadership resulted in subsequent generations asking themselves if they were up to the job and the standard that she had set.

Jenny's experiences as a teacher first in Blackall and later in the Brisbane bayside suburb of Sandgate no doubt contributed to her ability to manage meetings of the independent minds that make up our industry and our party. Jenny continued her studies to add another skill set with a bachelor of business in corporate communications. Jenny was also a Beef Australia board member where we saw her business approach and practical nature in action. It was during this period that Jenny accepted that her health was limiting her involvement. While she stepped down from the board, she enjoyed attending and continued to take a keen interest in Beef 2018 and beyond.

Jenny quietly mentored a number of people across the state, including me. She encouraged and promoted people into roles and enjoyed the political discussions of the day. A close friend of hers is Senator-elect Susan McDonald, who said to me at the memorial service last Friday in Blackall that she was so pleased that Jenny was able to enjoy the success of the recent federal election and that her last message to Susan on that topic was that it was so good that the opinion polls had failed again.

Most importantly, Jenny was a fierce supporter of her family. Whether it was keeping her father Terry in line, appreciating the support of her brothers and sisters or enjoying watching her nieces and nephews grow into their own lives, Jenny encouraged the next generation. Jenny Russell has been someone who was regarded as an inspiration. The road to success as she signposted it was marked by acquiring skills, working hard, being practical and being as direct as possible. She encouraged people like Susan McDonald and myself to take on roles. Senator McGrath described her as formidable, but I and Susan McDonald considered that she was made of the black soil and the buffel, the droughts and the good seasons in the district. She was unfailing, unwavering, consistent and honest. Jenny, we will miss you.