




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Kippin-O'Connor, Ms VA

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (9.55 am): I rise on behalf of the KAP today to express our sincere condolences to the family and friends of former member for Mourilyan, Vicky Kippin-O'Connor. I am also proudly speaking as the current member whose electorate takes in almost the entirety of Vicky's former electorate. This includes the former Johnstone and Herbert shires which are now the Cassowary Coast and Tablelands regional councils. I express my heartfelt thoughts and wishes to the family and friends already mentioned who are in attendance today.

We are all aware that Vicky comes from a well-known and highly respected pioneering farming family in the Burdekin district. History has shown, no doubt from her family genes, that Vicky displayed leadership, negotiating skills and the ability to forge outcomes for the benefit of the community. It is no wonder and inevitable that with these qualities Vicky would become a member of parliament from 1974 to 1980.

I remember vividly when I took up my new seat of Hill how excited Vicky was to be in my ear constantly about the issues affecting the region. She was certainly passionate about getting her point across, but she always had a vision, a plan and an outcome. For years I would regularly hear Vicky on the weekly *Country Hour* show talking confidently about the agriculture and banana industries and eradicating black sigatoka.

One of her main achievements was the upgrade of Palmerston Highway. As members of parliament we celebrate with the community when we receive funding. Vicky went far beyond this. Vicky laid the foundation, turning the Innisfail to Millaa Millaa road, commonly known as the old Palmerston track, spanning 54 kilometres, into the major arterial highway it is today. Thousands of prime movers, grey nomads and locals use this road daily. It has given access from the coast to the Tablelands, the gulf and North-West Queensland. This highway is a road I commonly use to get from one end of my electorate to the other.

We all have Vicky to thank for what is known as the Palmerston Highway. The Vicky Kippin-O'Connor Bridge is a tribute to her never-say-die attitude in laying the foundations for this important road infrastructure to North Queensland. While Vicky was ill she still went out and about in her community with the same passion and drive.

It was around eight months ago I caught up with Vicky at the East Palmerston navua sedge and wild dogs meeting. I asked her this question: 'Vicky, how did you do it—get the funds for the Palmerston Highway upgrade?' She said, 'I drove Russ Hinze, the former transport and main roads minister, up the wall. I knew that if I could get him to come up to the region he would be persuaded.'

Vicky went on to say that she finally convinced the minister to visit. She said that she had organised some yummys for when they got to the top including scones with locally produced fresh cream and cheese. When Vicky and the minister drove from the bottom to the top these goodies would

be waiting for him, including the entire Millaa Millaa community. However, she also cleverly arranged while they were driving up the range for them to pass a convoy of milk tankers and long haul timber trucks on their way down, making their journey pretty long and difficult to put it mildly. By the time they got to the top the minister told the community that was waiting, 'I have got the message. You will have your road.' God bless you, Vicky, for what you did for the north.