




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

McElligott, Mr KV

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.38 am): Today the House is paying tribute to Ken McElligott, who served as the member for Townsville from 1983 to 1986 and as the member for Thuringowa from 1986 to 1998. I first met Ken and his wife, Shirley, when I doorknocked their home in Douglas when I first contested the Townsville City Council election in 2004. They lived only a dozen doors down from me.

Ken gave me some useful political advice on that occasion. He suggested I not waste my time and that I know my targets better. I then turned to Shirley who gave me similar advice. Having observed Ken McElligott's contribution over many years I can say with certainty there are two things that drove his political endeavours: his commitment to his community and his commitment to his political movement. Ken served the people of Townsville as deputy mayor or alderman for seven years before he commenced his 15 years service in this House. Having also served in similar roles, I understand Ken's commitment to the importance of local government and I have an appreciation of what drove his civic involvement. It is interesting to note that when called upon to deliver his maiden speech in this House after the 1983 election, Ken chose to speak of the future of local government generally and highlight some of the challenges that local authorities were facing. I quote—

... I want to mention the concern being felt in local government circles in Queensland at the trend to more and more government interference in the affairs of local authorities and to attacks on their autonomy ... In these situations, it seems to me that less interference by large Government, the better.

Ken believed in the capacity of local government to serve the interests of local communities. It was this sense of service that he brought to this House upon his election. It was the wellbeing of the Townsville community that drove him whilst in state parliament and it was the impact on everyday issues that he sought to highlight. Again in his maiden speech he drew attention to the housing shortage and the impact of homelessness. He said—

The only way that this problem will be overcome is by a firm commitment from the Government to the construction of many more rental houses. Single person accommodation must not be forgotten, either, as youth homelessness is now an unfortunate fact of life.

Ken McElligott served as minister for health in the first ministry of Wayne Goss and then served as minister for lands from immediately after the 1995 election until the defeat of the Goss government in early 1996. Having announced his intention to retire at the 1998 election, he answered his party's call when circumstances threw the campaign into disarray. His defeat that year was in no way a reflection of his commitment and willingness to work hard or the respect he was held in the community.

Ken retained an abiding interest and involvement in sport. His championing of the North Queensland Games, his promotion of the Townsville Sports Reserve, his long-term involvement in hockey and his role as foundation chairman of the Townsville Suns in the NBL are remembered fondly. Indeed, Ken served as president of Hockey Queensland from 2001 to 2008 and was made a life member in recognition of his many years of commitment to the sport.

In recognition of his years of service to his political ideals, Ken McElligott was granted life membership of the Australian Labor Party, an event his son Scott described as probably his proudest moment. While not having known Ken as long as some members of this House, I regarded him as a friend. A champion of North Queensland, he established a record of which he and his family should be proud. In his later years he became a prolific letter writer to the Townsville *Bulletin*, defending his values and providing his views on public administration. Despite the odd ribbing, I was the target of his attention far less than many of my other LNP colleagues so perhaps that doorknock was not quite so wasted after all.

The Townsville community is poorer for his passing and I offer my personal condolences and those of the opposition to his wife, Shirley, their three children, Scott, Mark and Toni, and the entire family. Vale, Ken McElligott.