




Speech By
Les Walker

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Record of Proceedings, 16 September 2021

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

McElligott, Mr KV

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (9.59 am): Firstly, I would like to acknowledge Mrs Shirley McElligott, Ken's wife, Ken's son Scott McElligott and Scott's wife, Jen, who are with us in the gallery this morning. I would also like to acknowledge Mark and Toni who could not join us here today.

It is a real honour to stand to speak to this condolence motion in this place where Ken McElligott served the people of Townsville in the state seat of Townsville from 1983 to 1986. In 1986, Ken was re-elected in the new seat of Thuringowa where he served the people of Thuringowa up until 1998.

I want to go back to 1976, prior to Ken's service as a state member, when Ken McElligott was elected as a Townsville city alderman, as a member of Perc Tucker's ALP council team. Prior to this, Perc Tucker was a state member for the seats of Townsville North and Townsville West in this place. Perc Tucker lost his state seat in 1974. In 1976, he decided to run for mayor of Townsville, known as Tucker's Ten, and wins eight aldermen positions out of the 11 and gains control of the Townsville City Council and Ken McElligott is on board as an alderman. The campaign was a catchy one and the slogan was 'Tucker's Ten'.

I remember people talking about Tucker's Ten. Our baker at the time, Noel Wilson, would deliver fresh bread most mornings to our home in Oonoonba prior to us kids heading off to school. Noel would talk to my father about politics and would make us late for school. Noel would mention in conversations different names of people, and the names Perc Tucker and Ken McElligott always stood out to me.

In 1977, I started at Townsville State High School and one of my teachers was none other than Tony Mooney who that year was elected as an alderman on the Townsville City Council and joined Ken McElligott and Perc Tucker. I felt pretty good having a teacher who was an alderman and who would mention from time to time the names Perc Tucker and Ken McElligott during our school lessons which were social studies. I was not scarred at all!

You might think, 'Les, what is this all about?' Two years later in 1979, the baker, Noel Wilson, runs for council on Perc Tucker's team and wins. He now joins Ken McElligott as a fellow alderman. This is where I have more contact and involvement with alderman Ken McElligott.

A year later, 1980, Ken becomes deputy mayor. At that stage I am working and still see Ken from time to time at the local soccer carnivals and cycling events as he would turn up to present trophies and medals and I would have a chat with him. Ken was very popular, well known and respected around the sporting scene. Deputy mayor Ken McElligott liked sport that much he convened a meeting in February 1983 in which the concept of the North Queensland Sports Foundation grew and still operates today right across the North Queensland region.

That year Ken becomes state member for Townsville and three years later the state member for the new seat of Thuringowa which covered the Thuringowa Shire Council at the time which later became Thuringowa City, as I mentioned earlier.

Ken served as the minister for health in the Goss government from 1989 until 1991 and later served again as minister for lands in the same government from 1995 until 1996.

Ken was the real deal—a visionary, loved his family, sport and the people of Townsville. His memory will live on for a very long time. Vale, Ken McElligott.