



Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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ADJOURNMENT

Casey, Mrs G

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (7.16 pm): I am sure each of us all know how important our electorate office staff are. Gwen Casey is my assistant electorate officer. She has seen 14 more mango seasons than I have seen—which means she is going to retire, and she is retiring with her husband as of Friday next week. Gwen was my very first staff member I interviewed—in fact, she interviewed me for the job.

I remember going to hear Wayne Bennett talk at a luncheon. He talked about surrounding yourself with really good people—really good people who will challenge your thinking, who will not be the ‘yes’ person in your office but when you make that decision they will back you 110 per cent. This is what I get from Gwen each and every day. She is an absolutely amazing woman. When she interviewed me for the job and I offered her the job, she accepted it and we have been together ever since. It has been a fantastic six years.

Gwen is the glue in our office. She is a very compassionate person. I have seen her spend hours sitting with elderly people in particular, helping them complete forms and applications and making sure that they get it right and that they are really comfortable about what they are doing. On the other hand, I have also seen her not suffer fools. She handles some of the phone calls we get in our office with absolute finesse, but she lets them know where they stand and, quite often, where they do not stand. As I said, she is the glue in our office.

We have had some great highs—winning campaigns and elections. She has been there with us for those, but there have also been some deep lows. When my electorate officer, Niki, lost her husband in a fatal accident, Gwen was there. Gwen took her under her wing and treated Niki like her own daughter and helped her through that. These are the sorts of things we see in our electorate offices. They are like family to us—so when Gwen leaves she will leave a hole in our office. I have not been to see the Clerk yet, but when Gwen leaves I am going to ask him for three people to replace her! I am not happy about how that is going to go. We all know how important our staff are.

I am sure that Gwen and her husband, Arthur, are going to spend their time in retirement doing exactly what they want to do—they love travelling. On behalf of Niki and I, Gwen, we love you dearly. You will be sorely missed. You are always welcome in the door. We will put on the billy and make you a cup of tea. Gwen, thank you and I wish you all the very best.