




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Record of Proceedings, 30 March 2023

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Gordon, Mr WJ

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 am): The death of a former member of this House at a relatively young age is a stark reminder of the fragility of human life. It makes us realise we never know exactly how much time we have to complete those tasks we regard as important. I did not have the opportunity to serve as a member of this House when Billy Gordon was the member for Cook so, sadly, I have no personal insights to convey. Through a combination of circumstances his time here was brief. However, whatever those circumstances, he was driven by a desire to serve his community, one which faced a unique combination of geography, isolation and social challenge.

In his first speech after his election in 2015, Mr Gordon outlined his employment history and how it impacted his outlook. He said—

My life experiences have shaped me and my view of the world. I have had blistered hands and an aching back from swinging a cane knife in cane fields in Far North Queensland. I have pulled pots of beer and listened to locals discuss life and bush politics in Normanton's famous purple pub. I have learnt true mateship from proudly serving as a member of the 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment. I have worked as a builder's labourer, youth social worker, a cleaner and been a public servant.

Billy Gordon, who contested Leichhardt for the Labor Party in 2013, drew his political inspiration from two diverse politicians: Eric Deeral, the first Indigenous member for Cook and member of the National Party, and Bill Eaton, the Labor member for Mourilyan from 1980 until 1992. Their commitment to their communities pointed the direction in which he saw his political journey proceeding. He said—

I will serve the families in Far North Queensland.

...

... regardless of who they are and what political party they support.

He saw the great challenges in Cook being the need for health services, transport infrastructure, a reduction in cost-of-living pressures, support for local industries including tourism, protection of the environment and a reduction in high levels of youth unemployment. Billy Gordon will be remembered as a member who did his utmost to represent the interests of the people of his electorate, and his advocacy of the sugar industry in this House is proof of that.

We welcome his partner Olympia, his sister Megan and niece Olivia to the House today as we acknowledge his service. Billy Gordon's support for his community was genuine. We extend our condolences to his entire family and offer support to this motion.