




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2023

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Ahern, Hon. MJ, AO

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (9.58 am): I rise to speak to the condolence motion before the House for the former Queensland premier, founder and patron of the Queensland Community Foundation, the Hon. Mike Ahern AO. For many, Mr Ahern will be remembered as a political figure. He held numerous portfolios, most notably health and the environment. As we have heard today, and we know, he was a man of great integrity who steered Queensland through a time of political crisis, but he was much more than that: he was a great statesman who put people ahead of politics. Nowhere is this more evident than in his legacy at the Queensland Community Foundation. It is a legacy that will continue to impact Queensland for generations to come and will honour his memory as it makes changes at grassroots to build a brighter future for Queenslanders to come.

In 1997 Mr Ahern was instrumental in the founding of the QCF, a perpetual charitable trust which was launched with 12 subfunds and just \$300,000. Today his vision has produced 25 subfunds, one of which is the Bayside Community Fund, which is an electorate-based fund dedicated to supporting the Lytton community. This legacy of Mike's, the QCF, has \$121 million in funds, which is carefully managed under founding sponsor QIC and supported by founding funding sponsor Anglo American. More than \$35 million has been distributed to charitable organisations since its inception, with an expected \$5 million being distributed in 2024.

Mike's goal was to create a model for philanthropy that would last for all time. In 2020, when QCF reached \$100 million in trust, Mike was delighted to join the celebrations, despite some health concerns, and was still as full of enthusiasm as ever for his hopes for the fund to alleviate poverty, advance education and support Queenslanders in need.

In 2023 QCF is set to distribute an estimated \$5 million to Queensland non-profits. Since its inception, as I have said, QCF will have distributed just under \$40 million to Queensland charities all across the state. Mike, I am told, was incredibly proud to see the financial rewards of this philanthropic model supporting medical research through the recent pandemic and, of course, the bushfire crisis, just as he envisaged.

Mike was much loved by the community, as could be seen at the recent event for the launch of the QCF funding round at Government House. He was adored not only by the board but also by the staff of the QCF and many of the subfunds that were in attendance that day. Thank you for sharing Mike with us. He was a great human being and we are all the better for having him in our life. Queensland is better for it. Thank you for the lasting legacy you have left, Mike. Vale, Mike Ahern.