



Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**


**MEMBER FOR HILL**

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## **MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**Gordon, Mr WJ**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (9.56 am): I rise to offer my condolences to Billy's family and loved ones, especially Olympia. I rise to speak as a fellow crossbencher back in 2015 and on behalf of the member for Traeger and the member for Hinchinbrook. In 2015 there was a hung parliament. Labor had 43 seats and Peter Wellington made it 44. It needed 45 to govern and Billy ended up on the crossbench. Billy became one of the most influential people in the parliament, if not across Queensland, and every sector was pulling him this way and that way. Everyone wanted a piece of Billy. He had a massive task, a huge responsibility. The KAP was with him many times in the trenches. There were many heavy-duty decisions that were made and I really believe that while Billy had many battle scars he got through mostly on his own ability.

There were three things that best describe and sum up Billy. Billy was in high demand, as I mentioned before, and there were many interest groups that were trying to meet with the KAP and they would always say, 'Can you get Billy?' There was one instance where Billy told us that one of these big corporate bodies wanted to meet up with him to discuss a bill before the House. He said that they offered to shout him to the finest restaurant in Brisbane. He was told that there would be a five-course meal, lobster, all the cocktails, you name it—'This is all yours, Billy,'—and Billy said, 'I've got no problems with meeting, but I'm just happy to have a pie or a burger. That'll do me.'

Billy was also cunning. He could sniff out which way the political wind was blowing and one minute we would think, 'He's with us,' but then we would look over and there he was sitting on the other side. However, there were a couple of things on which Billy would never compromise, and they were things that were very close to his heart and family.

The KAP introduced the sugar marketing bill which gave marketing and arbitration rights to the sugarcane farming industry. There was a lot of pressure on Billy to oppose that bill. One of the milling companies had spent \$25,000 on an ad in the *Courier-Mail* at that time. This was pure, grassroots stuff and I never forgot what Billy said. He said, 'My father cut cane. I cut cane. This is a good bill. It looks after the farmers and the workers. I will back the bill.' That became the eighth private member's bill that was ever passed in Queensland's history. I believe that many Queenslanders are better off after the three years that Billy served in this parliament. Rest in peace, Billy. God bless.