




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2024

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Gilmore, MR TJG, OAM

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (9.44 am): I rise to contribute to the condolence motion of Thomas John George Gilmore, better known to us as Tom Gilmore. Tom Gilmore's father, Thomas Vernon Gilmore, was the member for Tablelands from 1957 to 1963. In February 1987 Tom Gilmore stood in this House to make his maiden speech 30 years after his father. There are not many who have followed their parents in elected life. Tom Gilmore was born at Mareeba in 1946 and prior to entering politics was a farmer. He came from humble beginnings.

In 1968 he married Sally at Mareeba's Church of England. At the outset of their marriage they lived in a house with no floorboards in the kitchen. Sally had to walk on planks to get to the stove. However, their marriage was a partnership and Sally was Tom's advisor and confidant. If there is one thing that was in Tom's character that left a lasting impression, it was how humble he was as a person. On receiving his OAM he is quoted as saying—

You spend your life doing these things and you surround yourself with amazing people who do great stuff. This award belongs to my family, my wife and children and to the extraordinary people I've worked with in recognition of what we have achieved in our community.

Tom served this state as the member for Tablelands and as the minister for mines and energy during the Borbidge-Sheldon coalition government. It was then that I came to know him well. He was also aware that I was good friends with his electorate officer, Colleen Lumbruski. I think when he could not find Colleen he would just pick up the phone to me to discuss issues. Sometimes it felt as though I was his second electorate officer.

Tom also served as a councillor on the Mareeba shire and as mayor of both the Tablelands Regional Council and the Mareeba Shire Council. It was as mayor of Mareeba Shire Council that I was privileged to learn from him and spend time in my shadow ministerial role. At my first meeting with him, he had a very important question for me. His question was: which town is further west, Mareeba or Cunnamulla? It is in fact Mareeba, but I reminded Tom it was just by a whisker. There was a good reason he asked this—because he wanted to put in perspective the challenges his council experiences.

Mareeba shire owes much of its financial position today to then mayor Tom Gilmore and his team at the time of deamalgamation. They had to make some tough decisions early on following deamalgamation. One decision was a significant rate rise which Tom ensured only happened once. He also stressed the importance of going up the hill. He told me it is easy to get to Cairns, but politicians need to get up the hill to Mareeba. Following his retirement from council, it has been mandatory for many of us on this side of the House to ensure that every time we were up the hill we gave Tom a call to report to him that we had in fact gone up the hill.

To Sally, his daughters and grandchildren, who are watching today, you can be very proud of Tom's achievements whilst in this parliament and also local government. I want to acknowledge his contribution and extend my deepest condolences to your family. We all will miss Tom, and I have no doubt that his wisdom and gentlemanly manner will be charming heaven as we speak.