



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**


**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2024

## **MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**Gilmore, MR TJG, OAM**

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (9.39 am): I rise to make my contribution to the condolence motion for the late Mr Tom Gilmore. I would like to express my deepest condolences to Tom's wife, Sally, his children and grandchildren. I first met Tom in 2017, running as a first-time candidate for the seat of Cook. Prior to meeting Tom for the first time, I did my background research to help me prepare for the meeting. While it was all well and good to research his political affiliations and history, none of it really mattered in the end. Despite our political ideologies, Tom has never let politics get in the way of achieving outcomes for our community. I value the strong working relationship I had with Tom. He was committed, passionate and very hardworking. Mostly, he was respectful and fair in his approach to drive change for Mareeba, the Tablelands and Far North Queensland.

Just four short years ago I acknowledged Tom's retirement in parliament following the 2020 local government elections. Given Tom's colourful history in politics, one could only wish the best for him following years of dedication and commitment to his community and the people of Queensland. The last time I saw Tom was at one of my mobile offices in Mareeba when he dropped in to check in to see how I was going. Tom was always very supportive and encouraging of me in my role, and for that I am forever grateful.

Tom was fierce in his advocacy for better road infrastructure and improved transport linkages to support industry growth and future economic development in the region. It was an absolute pleasure to work with Tom to deliver local projects. The collaboration meant that, in my first term and Tom's final term, we secured millions in funding for Mareeba. One of Tom's top priorities was the Burke Developmental Road. He was always very forthcoming about his frustration at not being able to secure government funding for the sealing of sections of the Burke Developmental Road. In my very first budget, we secured \$14 million for the sealing of the Burke Developmental Road and I remember the excitement in his voice when I rang him to give him the good news. Although we did not get to finish the sealing of the Burke Developmental Road, I will continue to fight to see this project through to the end.

The Mareeba Animal Refuge was another one of our pet projects. Tom advocated for a brand new facility over many years, and it was wonderful to secure funding to deliver a brand new animal management facility. We went on to deliver the Mareeba industrial hub and the Mareeba community hub; the investment committed for Mareeba to support service delivery in the community; the Mareeba Hospital upgrade to deliver the new operating theatre to offer endoscopy services, general surgery, dental surgery and birthing services in Mareeba; the Mareeba Hospital staff accommodation; and the brand new ambulance station. Tom was very passionate about the Mareeba Airport upgrades to unlock economic opportunities for the region. It was an absolute pleasure to attend stage 1 and stage 2 of the Mareeba Airport opening with him.

Tom served on Mareeba Shire Council from 1982 to 1987. In 1986 he was elected as the National Party member for Tablelands in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. In 1992 he moved to the front bench as shadow minister for minerals and energy, a portfolio he held until the coalition took government in 1996 and whereupon he became the minister. He was defeated in 1998 by One Nation candidate Shaun Nelson. His defeat, though, in 1998 did not deter Tom away from his strong commitment to fight for better outcomes. By 2000 Tom was back in the game when elected to the Mareeba Shire Council.

From 2008 to 2013, the shire of Mareeba was amalgamated into the Tablelands region and Tom successfully held the position of mayor of the Tablelands Regional Council. Following the deamalgamation of the shire of Mareeba in 2014, Tom was again elected as the mayor of Mareeba Shire Council and held the position until his retirement in 2020. On 8 June 2020, Tom was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for his services to the parliament and people of Queensland.

Sadly, Tom passed away at his home in Mareeba on 14 March 2024 aged 77 years. He donated his body to the Human Bequest Program at James Cook University. In the words of Maya Angelou—

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

I will always remember Tom for showing me the good side of politics. Vale, Mr Gilmore.