



Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**


**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2024

### **MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

#### **Gilmore, MR TJG, OAM**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.34 am): Tom Gilmore, whose service we recognise today, was a true son of Far North Queensland and of the Tablelands region. His entire life was dedicated to the people of that region and he sought to bring industry, public improvements and better community facilities to the towns of the area. He was unstinting in his commitment to the Tablelands and Mareeba and he will be long remembered as one of the hardest working members for this region.

It is worthy of note that Tom Gilmore is one of a small band of members of this House who followed in the footsteps of their fathers as an elected representative. The Gilmore family arrived in Queensland from Ireland, via New Zealand, in 1875. Tom's grandfather, John, took his family to Wolfram Camp in the Mareeba district in 1907 and took out mining leases and established an ore crushing plant. The Gilmores were instrumental in developing the tobacco industry in the Tablelands area and it was into this agricultural-based environment that Tom was born in 1946. Educated at Emerald Creek State School, Mareeba State School and Mareeba State High School, Tom completed his formal education at Gatton Agricultural College. He furthered his own agricultural interests in the Mareeba area, centred on pastoral industries, until the 1974 collapse of the beef market resulted in him selling the family farm and diversifying into real estate, predominantly developing land for urban settlement.

It was during this time that Tom Gilmore's urge to serve his local community began to develop. He served on the Mareeba Shire Council from 1982 until his retirement in 1987. He entered this place in 1986 upon being elected to the newly recreated seat of Tablelands, which was carved out of the existing seats of Barron River and Mulgrave. It was as a member of this House that Mr Gilmore developed a reputation as one of the Tableland's most vocal advocates. The welfare of the people of the region—hard hit by significant changes to the tobacco and dairy industries, in particular, but also to agricultural industries more generally—was uppermost in his mind. In his first address in this House in 1987 Tom spoke with pride of the people of Tablelands. He said—

The population of the electorate of Tablelands is one of extraordinary ethnic and cultural diversity. People have come from the four corners of the earth to settle there, and to strive for a future which was not within their grasp in their homeland. With them they brought their culture, creed and religion, and now after one, two or in some cases three generations, have fused together into a strong and capable Australian community, while retaining the best of their diverse cultural heritage.

Tom Gilmore was appointed minister for community services, ethnic affairs and northern development in the final days of the Ahern government but failed to be appointed to the incoming Cooper ministry. However, after experience on the opposition front bench between 1992 and 1996, Tom Gilmore served as minister for mines and energy during the term of the Borbidge government. Tom Gilmore's state political career was cut short in 1998, but that setback provided an opportunity to

renew his association with local government. He served as mayor of the Tablelands Regional Council from 2008 to 2012 and became mayor of the deamalgamated Mareeba Shire Council in 2014, a position he held until his retirement in 2020.

It was in this role I came to know and respect him immensely. He ensured the financial position of the newly established council and was instrumental in upgrading the Mareeba Airport in 2019 to the extent that the Tom Gilmore Mareeba Aviation Industrial Precinct is making a significant contribution to the economic wellbeing of the shire. Last month the mayor, Councillor Angela Toppin, paid tribute to her predecessor when she said—

We will remember him for his lifelong dedication to the expansion of the local economy, his advocacy to improve roads and transport linkages, and the importance he placed on the creation of jobs for our youth.

Tom Gilmore's contribution to his community and the state is immeasurable. He never stopped working to help the people of the Tablelands region, a commitment he brought into this House. His recognition in receiving the Medal in the Order of Australia in 2020 was fitting. We extend our condolences to his wife, Sally, his daughters and his family on their loss. It is appropriate to give the last word to Tom Gilmore himself when he said upon his retirement from Mareeba Shire Council in 2020—

If there's a legacy to be left in local government it would be that I continually pursued an expansion of the economic base of my community.

...

You have to make sure there are options for local businesses to thrive and it's important to have opportunities for our young people because if there's no opportunity there's no future.

Vale, Tom Gilmore.