




Speech By
Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Muntz, Mr GH

 **Hon. AJ CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.54 am): 'Members may ask, "Who is this rookie from North Queensland?"' and it was with those words during his inaugural speech in the Queensland parliament that Geoffrey Hugh Muntz started his career as a politician representing the great seat of Whitsunday. We lost that rookie from North Queensland, who served the Whitsunday electorate from 1980 to 1989, last year. I will not go over what the Premier has said in relation to Geoff's early years.

In 1980, running for the National Party, Geoff was elected to parliament as the member for Whitsunday, a seat he would hold for nine years. I shared with the Muntz family that my grandfather, Stanley Camm, had put his hat in the ring for nomination against Mr Muntz and withdrew for preselection; he did not have the numbers, and we know politics is a game of numbers. I think I ended up with the good end of the deal because I got to have more time with my grandfather, unlike the Muntz family, who had to deal with their father being away so much.

On 5 March 1981, during his inaugural speech, the fierce advocate for North Queensland raised an issue that has continued to plague this great state, and I hope the members of this House and members of his family do not mind me sharing elements of this speech from *Hansard*.

Of utmost importance to Whitsunday and the whole of North Queensland is the lack of an all-weather Bruce Highway. I ask members to consider the inconvenience, the loss of revenue and the total lack of security to Australia in this regard. I am aware that basically this is a Federal responsibility. It is my desire to ensure and see within my career in this Parliament, the construction of such a highway from Rockhampton to Cairns. The section from Mackay to Townsville is in a deplorable state. I acknowledge the enormous amount being spent on the coastal highway between Sarina and Marlborough. Unfortunately the public at large does not see, and is unable to fully appreciate, the millions already spent on this section. I also acknowledge that, as finance permits, work is carried out on other troublesome sections.

I realise that a big percentage of Queenslanders live in the south-east corner. However I do not agree that funds should be allocated on a population basis in this instance. It is about time that both State and Federal Governments recognised that Central and North Queensland provide huge revenues and potential from mining and primary production, and a much greater share of this revenue must be returned to this area by way of better roads.

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It should, without question, be a tourist asset and an encouragement to State decentralisation. That in itself is another subject. It is my view that the Bruce Highway needs upgrading and rebuilding, and we must support our Main Roads Minister in his submissions for greater Federal funding.

How those words still ring true to this House today. I think Mr Muntz would be quite proud of the incredible work undertaken to reconnect our North Queensland communities in times of the recent disaster.

Geoff Muntz was also a great advocate for the growing tourism industry in the Whitsundays. He understood the potential and the beauty of our region, and fought for its development and growth. There was also the appreciation of the Great Barrier Reef with the former member calling for the reef to be protected at all costs, as well as understanding the need to develop research into the crown-of-thorns in the 1980s. Due to his working background before entering politics, he also understood the need to develop agriculture and mining industries in our electorate which have continued to grow to this day.

During his time as the member for Whitsunday, Geoff was known to attend schools in the electorate to pass on wisdom to young school leaders. He would go to local sporting club presentations to hand out awards and he spent countless hours meeting with locals and was crucial in the start of a number of projects for our region.

Geoff Muntz also served as minister across a myriad of portfolios. In my communications recently with Mayor Greg Williamson, he reflected on his time and friendship with Geoff Muntz as the former deputy chair of the Mackay Whitsunday Tourism when Geoff was tourism minister. He said he always had Mackay and the Whitsundays firmly front and centre and that tourism development was his passion.

I would like to thank Geoff's wife, Jean, his son Brett and daughter-in-law Lynelle for being here today, for allowing him to serve our great community of the Whitsundays and for sharing his life with us.