




Speech By
Donna Kirkland

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 12 March 2025

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Fisher, Mr N; Webber, Mr J; Wyatt, Mr T

 **Mrs KIRKLAND** (Rockhampton—LNP) (2.53 pm): On behalf of the electorate of Rockhampton and having experienced the stress of disaster recovery, I wish all of those going through the clean-up of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred a speedy return to normalcy.

I rise today to address the significant lives of three Rockhampton men who shaped our community in numerous ways. Our community was disheartened on learning of the passing of Mr Neil Fisher in July 2024, Mr Jim Webber in November 2024 and, most recently, Mr Tom Wyatt in January 2025. These three men were of high significance and stature in our region not only because of their elected roles in local government but also because of the dedication and the love that they had for their community.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the life of Neil Fisher. Neil served as councillor for Rockhampton for 16 years, working across many roles and portfolios during his time, including deputy mayor and acting mayor on numerous occasions. He served our community with unwavering commitment, driven by passion and for the betterment of all. One of his many notable achievements was his contribution to the Rockhampton Airport. He was steadfast in his pursuit to see it develop and improve. Neil was also famous for his weekly segment on *Seven News* sharing his gardening tips.

Next, I would like to acknowledge the life of former mayor Jim Webber. Jim was a dedicated leader who leaves a lasting impact not only on those who knew him personally but also on the entire community he served. Jim was first elected to council at 29 years of age in 1970, serving for 38 years including three consecutive terms as mayor. Jim was devoted to infrastructure, community livability and securing local jobs. He was an advocate for one and all and cared for all those around him. Jim is also celebrated for his legacy of the Kershaw Gardens waterfalls, where thousands continue to take photographs for every occasion.

Last, but most definitely not least, I would like to acknowledge the life of Tom Wyatt, our local garden guru with the greenest of thumbs and gardening talkback on ABC Radio. Tom was a dedicated horticulturalist and curator for the local council for 34 years plus an elected councillor for eight years, driving the betterment of our many iconic green spaces around Rockhampton—the transformation of Kershaw Gardens from an old landfill site along with the Japanese Garden additions and contributions to the Rockhampton Zoo, where our chimps now thrive because of Tom's tenacity and, shall I say, creative problem solving. Tom's legacy will be seen in beauty by all who visit and live in Rockhampton, and that is a legacy I am sure he would have been proud to leave.

These three men left legacies we can only hope to live up to, and I am sure their names will live on forever engraved in the memories of Rockhampton and Central Queensland residents. I would like to send my heartfelt condolences to the families of these three great men as we give honour where honour is due, entering this memoir into *Hansard* for all time.