



Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 May 2019

## **MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

### **Kippin-O'Connor, Ms VA**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (9.42 am): I rise to add my support to the motion of condolence and respect for Mrs Vicky Kippin-O'Connor. I acknowledge in the gallery today a number of Vicky's family members and friends who have made trips from all over Queensland to be here with us today. As we have heard, Vicky, who was born in Ayr, came from a large farming family based in the Burdekin so, of course, the sugar and beef industries were an important part of her life. That has continued with her relatives sitting in the gallery today, whose strong attachments to both the sugar and the beef industries continue.

In December 1974, Vicky was elected as the National Party member for Mourilyan. In March of the following year she entered parliament. Together with the Liberal member for Salisbury, Rosemary Kyburz, Vicky was one of two women elected to the same parliament for the first time in Queensland. Vicky was well ahead of her time. By looking through *Hansard*, it is easy to see that she fought for an electorate and a region that faced many of the same issues that they face today. Her maiden speech highlights the importance of women in the regions. It is very appropriate that one of the first women in the Queensland parliament spoke on that important topic during International Women's Year.

Vicky was a foundation student of the university college of Townsville, the institution that would later become James Cook University and she taught in Toowoomba. Therefore, it is not surprising that she spoke in support of the preschool correspondence program, which was a precursor to today's eKindy program. I know that the Minister for Education is aware of requests to grow that program in my electorate. It is an honour to know that Vicky would support that expansion now, just as she did in 1975.

Vicky's maiden speech, which was that parliament's address-in-reply, touched on the need to support the beef industry, the need for the right infrastructure to support the growing sugar industry and the need to improve roads. She spoke of the need to ensure services such as health were provided to remote areas just as they were in the south-east. More than 44 years later, we continue to fight for those same services, just as Vicky would want us to do. Four road projects were also mentioned in that speech, including the need for major works on the Palmerston Highway and the Ravenshoe-Mount Garnet Road. Vicky fought for those projects throughout her service in this place and it is fitting that a bridge on the Ravenshoe-Mount Garnet Road was named in her honour.

Throughout her parliamentary career, Vicky kept up with the pressure for new preschools in Ravenshoe and Mount Garnet, to name but a few. She ensured Queensland schoolchildren throughout the state benefitted from a textbook allowance to help them achieve all that they could. She stood up for the rights of farmers and graziers to manage their land.

Upon her departure from parliament, Vicky was very active in many areas of North Queensland life. In 1981 she received the inaugural Commercial Fisherman of the Year Award in recognition of her contribution in the reorganisation of the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation. She served

as a councillor on the Johnstone shire council and was appointed chairman of its health committee. In 1984 she became the Queensland administrator of the Northern Australian Development Council and in that same year she started her own business in Townsville.

Vicky remained active in primary industry organisations and was the inaugural president of the Zonta Club in Innisfail. She remarried in 1989 and returned to her family property with her husband, Shane O'Connor, where they had cattle and grew bananas and lychees. She served as a director and president of the Australian Banana Growers Council from the late 1990s until 2007. Former council president Len Collins said that Vicky put in a lot of effort, she was thorough and gave her everything. Vicky received an award of honour in 2009 from the banana industry for her contributions at both state and national levels

Vicky Kippin-O'Connor was an advocate for the north of our great state, an advocate for primary producers, a supporter of families and a fighter for Queensland children. As I mentioned earlier, she was well ahead of her time. Her maiden speech focused on her experience and how that experience highlighted the needs of her constituents. Vicky's last speech in this place was on 24 September 1980 when she asked the minister for transport if Queensland would adopt photographs on drivers' licences and how that would be implemented in country areas. Haven't we come a long way since then!

In short, Vicky fought for regional Queensland. If we are to truly honour Vicky, all in this place must stand up for the regions and stand up for Queensland families. That would be truly honouring the life and work of Vicky Kippin-O'Connor.