

Gina Rinehart farewells Lady Flo with Kingaroy carol singalong

Tony Moore

Family friend and mining prospector Gina Rinehart remembered singing Christmas carols with Lady Flo a few days before the former Queensland premier's wife died.

Ms Rinehart visited Lady Flo Bjelke-Petersen, wife of late Nationals stalwart Sir Joh, at her nursing home in Kingaroy last week.



Gina Rinehart has paid tribute to family friend Lady Flo on her passing on Thursday. Photo: Supplied

“In a little tribute to her during my recent visit to her and Kingaroy, we sung some Christmas carols she loved, amended to 'Australianise' the words and in which mentioned those wonderful Lady Flo pumpkin scones,” Ms Rinehardt said.

“One of my many favourite memories of my dear friend will be her singing in fine voice, knowing every word of those Christmas carols, and of us together on a previous visit, with her son John and I around her bedside.



Lady Flo Bjelke Petersen at the reopening of the Kingaroy Community Hospital renamed in her honour. Photo: Tony Moore

“This beautiful memory is one I’ll also treasure throughout my life.”

Liberal National Party president Gary Spence expressed his condolences and those of all members of the LNP to the family and friends of Lady Flo.

“Queensland lost one of our greats today. Lady Flo was a tireless worker for our great state, including her 12 years as a National Party senator,” Mr Spence said.

“Well known for her loyalty, friendship and faith, Lady Flo’s contributions will not be forgotten, nor the example she set in her service to others.

“Rest in peace Lady Flo.”

Ms Rinehart, the chief executive of iron ore development company Hancock Prospecting, founded after her father Lang Hancock discovered iron ore in the Pilbara in 1952, said her family became close friends with the Bjelke-Petersen family over many years.

“Lady Flo was an extra special lady, one of the finest in Australia I know, who, along with her husband Sir Joh, contributed so much to their family, Kingaroy, Queensland and our country,” she said.

“Lady Flo will be remembered by many as a very kind, thoughtful, considerate, fair, decent, honourable and hardworking premier’s wife.

“Indeed, she was often called the member for the Kingaroy area.

“In her own right, she was a person of impeccable character and personal strength, a senator and much-loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

“And to those who knew her, a true and wise friend, who we were extremely fortunate to know. She certainly made me love my visits to [Bjelke-Petersen property] Bethany and Kingaroy, as I'm sure she did for many, many others too.

“Lady Flo was loved by many Australians and will be very greatly missed, especially by her wonderful family and friends. God bless you dear Lady Flo.”

Ms Rinehart, Australia's wealthiest woman, has extensive cattle interests throughout Australia.

Ms Rinehart made a \$600,000 grant to help upgrade the Kingaroy Community Hospital. It was renamed the Lady Flo Bjelke-Petersen Community Hospital and reopened in 2016.

Tributes to Lady Flo were also received from Queensland's Liberal National Party.