



Speech by

**Hon. K. LINGARD**

**MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT**

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Hansard 11 March 1999

**MR N. BONNER; MR J. NONA**

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (7.18 p.m.): I rise to make a short comment about the lives of two great Queenslanders. The first is Senator Neville Bonner and the second is Joey Nona, Chairman of Badu Island in the Torres Strait.

Even though he was in his 70s, I asked Neville Bonner to chair the Aboriginal deaths in custody program in Queensland. This was a difficult task, because it was a position that required the respect of Aboriginal people and both mainland Islanders and Islanders from the Torres Strait. It required the combination of several existing committees. Senator Bonner had a magnificent ability to be able to handle all levels of administration. He had great ability handling the media and all levels of bureaucracy, and he particularly handled Aboriginal and Islander problems very well. Many times, I observed his ability to listen to people presenting their list of requests for Government aid only to have Neville ask them, "Are you telling me you want that or are you telling me you need that?" As he would say, "I might want a Rolls Royce, but that does not mean to say that I need a Rolls Royce." Continually, he mentioned the word "equality"—equality for both black and white. During extensive tours throughout Cape York, I had the pleasure of listening to his ideas and opinions. I asked him to do a difficult job; it was a pleasure to see how well he tackled it and achieved results.

Similarly, I pay tribute to Joey Nona, who was one of the great men of the Torres Strait islands when I lived there in the 1970s. Regardless of his own politics, Chairman Joey regarded all visitors and treated all visitors to Badu with dignity. At all times, even when he was not well, he would come down to speak to us whenever we went to Badu. He was obviously proud of his magnificent football grounds—grounds that had lights and a double-storey concrete grandstand. Badu, with its new hospital and facilities such as the motel, are a testament to a man who will always be remembered for the leadership that he provided in the Torres Strait islands.

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