



Speech by

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard 25 May 1999

RT HON. D. FATCHETT

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 a.m.): This morning I pay tribute to a great friend of Queensland and somebody whom I am sure the Premier would also know. I refer to the sudden and tragic death of the Rt Hon. Derek Fatchett, British Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Minister died at the age of 53. He was the Blair Government Minister responsible for dealings with this part of the world and in particular in respect of dealings with the State of Queensland as they came before the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

I had the opportunity to meet Derek Fatchett on two occasions. He provided enormous support to the State of Queensland during the Australian bid to host Expo 2002 and subsequently in relation to the status and future of the British Consulate-General in Brisbane. I am sure honourable members would be aware of the fact that the Minister played a major role in response to the bipartisan motion to keep the British Consulate-General in Brisbane open when there were questions about its closure. From my discussions with him when I was in London in February, I am aware also of the very important role that he was playing to assist Australia in terms of a resolution of the East Timor conflict and the fact that he had recently visited East Timor and was playing a very constructive role with our Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer.

Queensland has lost a good friend. The tragedy is that he was planning to visit Queensland and Australia later this year. Obviously, his sudden and unexpected death has put an end to that. On behalf of my colleagues—and I am sure I speak on behalf of members on both sides of the Chamber—I extend my sincere condolences to his wife and family. Queensland has lost a great friend in the British Government.
