



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 19 August 2003

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr R. C. Kruger, MP

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (9.59 a.m.): Joe Kruger served the people of Murrumba from 1977 to 1986. When he first won the seat from the National Party, it extended much further north and west than it does now, taking in a significant rural population. Joe was himself a primary producer. Not only did this give him a practical background, which he brought to bear in the service of his constituents; it was also a significant addition to the information base of the then comparatively small parliamentary Labor Party which, apart from Joe, consisted almost entirely of metropolitan and provincial city members.

During my short period as the federal member for Petrie between 1983 and 1984 I worked closely with Joe, whose electorate overlapped mine. We worked together well at that time and I know he had well thought out plans for initiatives that he intended to take as a minister if the Labor Party won the Treasury benches. His love of the land made him a natural for the portfolios that he held. He was also very much at home with constituency work. He once told me that when constituents go to their MP with a problem the problem is of two kinds: one that can be fixed or one that cannot. Of the problems that can be fixed, nearly all are administrative anomalies, oversights or errors. 'It follows,' he said, 'that opposition members can represent their electors as well as government members.' Different minds might come to different conclusions as to the political science of this, but there is no doubt that there was a seed of wisdom in what Joe said that should encourage members to sustain their efforts for those whom they represent even through the changing fortunes of the political cycle.

In his work as a member of this House, Joe was greatly assisted by his experience in local government. He was even more greatly assisted by his family, who were unflinching in their support for him, who were involved in the community along with him, and all of whom were well liked. On behalf of honourable members, I offer my sincerest condolences to all of Joe's extended family, including his daughters, Debbie, Joanne and Narelle. The world is better for the fact that Joe Kruger served in this parliament, and my part of the world in particular is a better place because it was represented by Joe Kruger for those years. May he now rest in peace.