



Speech by

# Lawrence Springborg

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Hansard Tuesday, 28 March 2006

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## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: DEATH OF SIR WALLACE ALEXANDER RAMSAY RAE

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.36 am): I rise to join the Premier in passing on the condolences of the opposition to the family of Sir Wally Rae. Sir Wally Rae was born on 13 March 1913 in Lindfield, New South Wales. He died at the Garden Village Retirement Home in Port Macquarie on 18 March 2006. He was the son of George Ramsay Rae and Alice Evelyn Haseldean. Sir Wally did not marry. He was educated at Lindfield Public School and Sydney Technical College. After completing his education, Wally worked as a jackaroo, quickly gaining promotion to overseer and then manager with the Australian Pastoral Company at Noondoo, Dirranbandi, Queensland. Wally harboured a keen interest in grazing and he was a first-class horseman. Utilising both interests and skills, he went on to work as a pastoral inspector, a stock and station agent and eventually acquired his own grazing property, Ramsay Park, at Blackall.

In March of 1940, Wally Rae joined the RAAF and served admirably until 1946. He attained the rank of flight lieutenant and received a commendation for meritorious service. Wally Rae served as a coastal command pilot in England, Africa and Gibraltar, and returned to Australia, where he worked as a test pilot at the Amberley RAAF base in Queensland.

Wally's first parliamentary election campaign in the seat of Barcoo was unsuccessful. However, his second attempt in a by-election on 5 October 1957 saw him successfully elected as the Country Party member for the seat of Gregory—a seat which previously had been held comfortably by the Labor Party. Wally remained a colourful, popular and effective member for Gregory for the ensuing 17 years. As a parliamentarian, he was well known for speaking his mind, particularly for and on behalf of his constituents. To the people of the west in centres such as Birdsville, Bedourie, Boulia, Windorah, Winton and Longreach, Wally Rae was best known for the work he had done for them personally during his 17 years in parliament. Wally was popular with supporters of all political persuasions and never allowed political differences to stand in his way of helping people. His name will remain synonymous with progress throughout western Queensland.

In 1969, Wally was elevated to the cabinet as the 14th minister in the coalition cabinet after the parliament approved legislation to increase the cabinet strength from 13 to 14 members. Wally proudly took on the role of minister for local government and electricity—a position he held until June 1972. He is accredited with introducing sound anti-pollution laws such as the state's first litter act and legislation which provided heavy penalties for polluting the state's rivers and streams.

In June 1972 Wally was sworn in as the Minister for Lands and Forestry, a role he filled until his retirement in December 1974. Following the death of Sir Peter Delamothe, Wally Rae was appointed to the role of Queensland Agent-General in London in December 1974. He was assisted by his widowed sister, Mrs Blackborrow, and was quickly regarded as an excellent host with extraordinary geniality. In 1976 Wally was awarded Knight Bachelor and in 1979 Sir Wally became the first Queensland representative in London to be made a Freeman of the City.

Upon his retirement in 1980, Sir Wally Rae returned to Queensland and settled into an apartment overlooking the city botanical gardens in Brisbane. He took on the honorary role of chairman of the Brisbane Forest Park advisory planning board. Later Sir Wally moved to Mount Tambourine before settling into the Garden Village Retirement Home at Port Macquarie.

Sir Wallace Rae's professional profile is as interesting as the character himself—a rigid, western jackeroo who became a campdraft champion, a test pilot, a grazier, politician, cabinet minister, diplomat and knight. Such an eclectic career would seem fanciful for any other person except for the gentleman known as Sir Wallace Alexander Ramsay Rae.