



Speech by

Hon. Lindy Nelson-Carr

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Hansard Tuesday, 7 August 2007

CONDOLENCE MOTION: DEATH OF HON TJ BURNS AO

Hon. LH NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism) (11.15 am): I too rise to pay tribute to the late Tom Burns. My contribution to this debate on the condolence motion is to thank Tom for the Moreton Bay Marine Park. It was his idea and he made it happen. Ten years after its inception, we are now rezoning the Moreton Bay Marine Park. I am privileged to be the minister for environment at this time and, in recognition of the historic and contemporary association that Tom had with the bay, I appointed him to a stakeholder reference committee to give advice on rezoning the bay.

Tom was especially well qualified for this appointment. He had a better understanding of the bay than anyone I know. Since leaving the parliament, Tom took up oyster growing in the bay. He spent half his life on his boathouse anchored south of Dunwich. There, as well as everywhere else, he was a ball of energy with a great love for the bay.

True to form, he provided valued and spirited input to the stakeholder reference group. He brought passion to the committee and a great sense of historical perspective. Tom dug worms, pumped yabbies, went crabbing and fished from jetties, beaches, headlands and estuaries in Moreton Bay. He had great stories of the early days when the bay was hardly impacted upon by human influence. He had seen the changes that came with the development of a very sophisticated city on its shoreline. Some changes he saw were for the better but many were for the worse. He was saddened by the loss of mangroves, the drop in fish stock, the drop in bird population and the fall in water quality. He was particularly saddened by those who littered the bay with plastic and the like, especially those in the boating fraternity who disposed of their effluent overboard. He had a strong determination to end this foul practice by providing more effluent pump-out facilities on the bay. Members, I will continue working on this matter on his behalf.

But Tom was always an optimist. He firmly believed that with good management we could turn things around. He had a strong view that all it took was the application of good science, good planning, common sense and of course will. He was scathing of vested interests that argued that there had been no decline in the bay, that things were sustainable and that nothing needed to be done. He was a great visionary and he was of course on a mission. And now he is gone. Tom lived by the bay and died on the bay. He had very strong views about how to protect the bay.

Mr Speaker and members, I hope that we can come up with a renewed zoning plan for Moreton Bay that will contribute to a healthy, sustainable marine park for generations to come—a zoning plan that Tom Burns would be proud of. To Angela and your family, I give my sincere condolences.