




Speech by

Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: LAMONT, MR CC

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.46 am): Colin Charles Lamont was born in Brisbane on 18 November 1941. He was educated at two of the more well-known schools in Brisbane, the Wilston State School and Brisbane Grammar School, before going on to tertiary study at Brisbane Teachers College and the University of Queensland. Before entering state parliament, he enjoyed a varied career as a secondary school teacher, a national director of Abschol, which was a committee supporting scholarships for Indigenous students, and the Royal Hong Kong Police. He also served as the senior history master at Brisbane Grammar School and as the head of the Brisbane Deaf School.

Mr Lamont was a member of the Liberal Party and was elected to represent the people of South Brisbane in this chamber in 1974. In an interview in 2010, Mr Lamont revealed that his original plan was to enter the federal parliament with the aim of becoming a foreign minister. He was urged to run in the supposedly unwinnable Labor seat of South Brisbane in the 1974 state election as a trial run and to get his name known before running in the federal seat of Brisbane. Mr Lamont remembered speaking to a senior Liberal state cabinet minister the day before the 1974 election. In Mr Lamont's own words he recalled, 'I said to him, "I think I'm going to win," and he said, "Don't get carried away, Col, you need 11 per cent and the state swing is going to be about seven per cent." Well, I got 17 per cent.'

As a parliamentarian, Mr Lamont demonstrated that he was a man of principle at a time when the National Party and Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen rode roughshod over many of the democratic principles we now take for granted. Mr Lamont was a staunch opponent of the then Premier's anti street march laws. He openly opposed the Premier's controversial appointment of Albert Field as a replacement senator in 1975, which ultimately contributed to the dismissal of Gough Whitlam as Prime Minister. And he spoke out against the appointment of Terry Lewis as police commissioner—criticism that proved warranted, as history went on to show.

Mr Lamont's approach to being an MP was one to be admired. He once said, 'We can't possibly know everything. And we can't possibly govern ourselves. Nor can we check on the government because we haven't got time. So we elect representatives to check on the government for us. So a member of parliament is a representative, and unless he is in the cabinet, his job is to check on what the cabinet is doing.' These are the words that Colin Lamont put into practice throughout his political career. We can be thankful that he did not take the advice of former National Party minister Russ Hinze. In an interview Mr Lamont retold the following anecdote—

Russ Hinze...said to me, 'Look, Joh doesn't agree with you on education', which worried me. But he said, 'Joh doesn't disagree with you.' He said, 'In fact, we all think you talk a lot of sense.' And he said, 'You know, you could have a portfolio after this election if you just promise to stay off police corruption and civil liberties.' And I said, 'If that's the price, I don't want it.'

Colin Lamont, described as a burr under the saddle of the Bjelke-Petersen government, unfortunately only served one term. Due to his constant criticism of the government his seat was subjected to a redistribution that forced him to stand in Woodridge where he was beaten in the 1977 election. Yet during his short stint in this House he showed the courage, integrity and character that we should all aspire to. Mr Lamont passed away on 7 July 2012. He is survived by his wife Gail, his sons Cameron and Lachlan and grandson Taylor. I extend my deepest sympathies to the family at this sad time for their loss.