




Speech by

Hon. Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Thursday, 1 November 2012

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: DEERAL, MR E

 **Madam SPEAKER:** Honourable members, just over five months ago we the Queensland parliament acknowledged Mr Eric Deeral in a special ceremony on his land and before the community of Hope Vale. Soon after we hosted him in this very chamber at the Indigenous youth parliament which was named in his honour. It was at this youth parliament that many Indigenous young people first heard of Mr Eric Deeral and also had the opportunity to meet him. The meeting between a new generation of young Indigenous leaders and a man who had blazed a trail creating opportunity out of hardship was very moving and emotional and will not be soon forgotten by those who were present.

Youth participants described the impact of meeting Mr Deeral. They talked about the inspiration they felt knowing that there had been someone who had pioneered before them with grace, strength and truth. They affirmed that Mr Deeral had turned negative experiences when he was growing up into positive outcomes and it helped them feel that pathways had been established for them to follow. The honour with which a new generation of Indigenous young people spoke of Mr Deeral and the encouragement they felt after meeting him gives us confidence for the future.

Members would be aware that I have spoken several times in this House about the late Mr Eric Deeral, who was the member for Cook from 1974 to 1977. I have spoken about the life and leadership of a man of great character and the importance of telling his story to a new generation; otherwise our history will be bereft of some fine examples of public service unless we intentionally highlight the legacy of great men and women.

My father, Gordon Simpson, also was elected as a member of the Queensland parliament at the same time as Mr Deeral, and he speaks of Eric Deeral with great respect, admiring what he achieved and the calibre of the man. I also admire the calibre of a man who stood for election a mere nine years after Indigenous people received the right to vote in Queensland and won a seat.

Eric Deeral's legacy was not limited to his time in parliament. His legacy is in the power of his story and the leadership he has demonstrated and inspired in others. Great leaders unlock the potential of people who they serve, helping them achieve their dreams to be their best and to claim their destiny for good. Today we honour the memory of the late Mr Eric Deeral and commend his example to the House and to the people of Queensland. Honourable members, will you indicate your agreement with the motion by standing in silence for one minute.