




Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: RANDELL, MR JH

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 am): I rise to add my personal support, and that of the entire opposition, to the condolence motion moved in respect of the late Jim Randell, the former member for Mirani. I am sure that others who follow me will say some words in relation to Mr Randell in respect of his service to his local community, but it has been revealed to me that Mr Randell was fondly known by his constituents as ‘Possum’ Randell—perhaps a reference to some of his features and how he looked. I am not quite sure how much further I can go into that particular discussion.

It is sobering to note that the honourable members for Southern Downs and Maroochydore are the only current members of the House who served with Jim. That not only is a reflection of perhaps the transient nature of politics but also serves to remind us that it is over 22 years since Jim Randell retired from the Legislative Assembly. As has been indicated, Jim served as the member for Mirani from 1980 until 1994. During that time he developed a reputation as a dedicated advocate for the people of his electorate, the people of Central Queensland generally and, in particular, for the three great industries of that region: sugar, beef and mining.

Jim Randell was born in Mackay in 1928 and his election to parliament could be seen as a logical step in his lifelong involvement in and commitment and dedication to his local community. As a canefarmer and grazier, Jim saw his role as being an outspoken champion of those industries. The three years that he served as a councillor and the three years that he served as chairman of the then Broadsound shire council attests to his commitment to his local community. Indeed, it is interesting to note that, for two years, he served as both the Broadsound shire chairman as well as the member for Mirani.

In 1980, Jim was elected as the member for Mirani, replacing the retiring Tom Newbery, who had represented the area since 1965. Jim went on to win five successive elections. In his maiden speech to parliament in 1981, Jim demonstrated his pride in his electorate and the Mackay region, highlighting the contribution of the sugar industry with its then six sugar mills located in the Mirani electorate, the growing coalmining industry and the developing tourism industry. In the same speech he draw the attention of the House to some key concerns of locals—concerns that demanded solutions. He said—

The Mirani electorate has many small country towns and a large rural population.

He went on to say—

... it is my conviction that the problems of poor opportunity for employment for women and special difficulties for school-leavers, call for fresh initiatives.

These are the themes that characterised Jim’s representation of the people of Mirani during his 14 years in this House. The former National Party deputy leader and member for Whitsunday, Ron Camm, claimed Jim Randell as a relative by marriage and Jim enjoyed a close relationship with his

former electoral neighbour. As a parliamentarian, Jim served as temporary chairman of committees between 1983 and 1986 as well as a member of numerous parliamentary and party committees. As the Premier has indicated, for nearly two years he was the minister for local government and racing in the Ahern government before being appointed the minister for works and housing in the Cooper ministry.

Jim Randell served through a tumultuous period in Queensland's political history and resigned from parliament on 31 March 1994. He will be remembered as a fierce and fearless representative of his electorate, a dedicated parliamentarian and a hardworking minister. His philosophy was relatively simple—and, again, I refer to his maiden speech where he said—

I sincerely believe that if we are to share the resources of this great State with justice, we must do it within a philosophy founded on the principles of free enterprise; of social changes being brought about within the framework of the law; of justice for all our citizens; and compassion for the under-privileged.

On behalf of the opposition, I support the motion of condolence and extend our condolences to the family of Jim Randell.