




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 28 November 2019

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Tenni, Hon. MJ OAM

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (9.51 am): I, too, rise to support the condolence motion in memory of the Hon. Martin Tenni, the former member for Barron River. I had the privilege of getting to know Martin as one environment minister to another. He came to my attention when I was appointed shadow minister for environment in the lead-up to the 2012 state election, but I will come to that in a moment. Other speakers have outlined Martin's considerable roles and the positions he held in local council, within parliament itself and within the broader community he represented. I reached out to another former colleague the former member for Barron River, Michael Trout, and good friend of mine for a couple of stories that might embellish a bit of what we have heard this morning.

As the Leader of the Opposition mentioned, one of his responsibilities when minister was to build dams. In fact, the story goes that when the then premier, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, appointed his ministers he was very clear that if they went over budget he would be finding someone who could manage the portfolio more appropriately. He made Martin the water minister. During his term he was responsible for building the dam we now know as Bjelke-Petersen Dam. In those days there were no mobile phones and the contractor who was building the dam urgently tried to get in touch with Martin, the then minister. When he finally made contact with Martin, the contractor said he had hit a lot of unexpected rock and that he would go over budget. Martin was very concerned but was thinking the figure might be around \$100,000 over budget when, in fact, it was \$1 million over budget. In true Martin Tenni fashion, he was trying to determine whether he would be sacked for going over budget or sacked for not building the dam that would bear the then premier's name. To ensure neither happened he found cuts in his budgets elsewhere, built the dam and stayed under budget and kept his ministerial role.

We have also heard how he took no prisoners in ensuring Far North Queensland was developed, and many of the infrastructure projects have been mentioned. Michael Trout shared this story at Martin Tenni's funeral recently. Land was identified in Port Douglas for the Sheraton Mirage project, which was spearheaded by John Morris. It was up to Martin as the local member to convince the ministers that Crown land along Four Mile Beach should be made 'special purpose' for a world-class resort. Martin Tenni had lined up all the ministers with the exception of Russ Hinze, so he found out when Russ was next in Cairns and had a helicopter waiting to whizz him up to Port Douglas. As honourable members can imagine, Russ Hinze was not built for helicopters; they actually scared the living daylights out of that former minister.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr POWELL: No, it was not a Chinook; I take that interjection. To make matters worse, on that day it was extremely windy. After hovering over Port Douglas, Russ Hinze just wanted to get out of the chopper. Martin being Martin asked Russ whether he would give his approval. Russ said, 'Yes. Just get this chopper on the ground.' Martin got his approval and Sheraton Mirage got its approval and ultimately put Port Douglas on the map.

As others have said, Martin was not afraid to share his opinion. My personal contribution that I want to finish on is that as minister for environment I spent a lot of time in Cairns and a lot of time dealing with crocodiles in particular. Every trip to Cairns involved a visit to John MacKenzie and 4CA. Whilst Martin and I spoke a lot on the phone and through various other means, it would always occur—every single time—that after talking to John he would throw open the phones, ‘First caller, Martin Tenni.’ Martin would then proceed in front of the broadcast audience on 4CA to tell me what I was doing wrong and how I could do it better. That approach—you just had to cop it on the chin—as others have said, is what made him such an excellent councillor and such a superb local member and minister. It is for that reason that Far North Queensland has become what it is today.

We pay our respects to Martin Tenni and pass on our sympathies to Dawn and the extended family. Rest in peace, Hon. Martin Tenni.