




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Gately, Mr LF

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.52 am): Leo Francis Gately lived what can only be described as a full life. His daughter Michelle, who is here and I met this morning, described it accordingly—

Leo lived life to the fullest in a true sense. We don't even have a count of how many jobs and professions he had over the years.

Leo endeavoured to relate this employment in his first speech in the parliament. I will not go through the list—the Premier has already outlined that—but I think there were some omissions in there. It is a lengthy and distinguished career in different areas that few in this House could match.

As a young man in West Wyalong Leo Gately was introduced to swimming and was taught by his aunt, Fanny Durack, the first Australian woman to win an Olympic gold medal in a swimming event. He had success in regional and state swimming championships and was coached by well-known Australian coaches Terry Gathercole and Forbes Carlile. He represented New South Wales in the 4 x 100 metre breaststroke relay and came within a fraction of a second of being selected for the 1958 Cardiff Commonwealth Games.

Leo Gately joined the New South Wales Police Service and worked in both Sydney and Newcastle before a traffic accident forced his ultimate retirement. He involved himself in a wide range of community activities. It was this experience that resulted in his election to the Newcastle City Council, a position he held for two years from 1971. Mr Gately was elected as the National Party member for the newly created seat of Currumbin in 1986, having moved from Northern New South Wales. He was proud of his New South Wales origins. This is a quote from his maiden speech in 1987—

... I make no apologies for having become a border-hopper because I believe—and I am sure all in this great and noble place would agree—that I have come to the greatest ... State of our nation.

That speech set out the issues that Leo Gately regarded as critical to the people of Currumbin and that is the need for balanced redevelopment, the need to preserve recreational areas and the Tallebudgera and Currumbin estuaries, the needs of the developing tourism industry, the requirements of better transport infrastructure and the need for a new high school in the electorate. Leo Gately even highlighted the need to extend the railway from Robina to the border and then to Murwillumbah. He was a champion for his constituents. He went in to bat for homeowners suffering from land subsidence and the need for beach replenishment following significant erosion. His experience as a police officer even led him to advocating for a victim of a stabbing when the legal system appeared to have left that person with nowhere else to turn. The arrest, trial and conviction of the offender owed much to Leo Gately's determination. Indeed, the *Daily News* in 1989 reported—

Mr Gately virtually conducted his own investigation to the extent of interviewing witness as he gathered information to take into the parliament, where his allegations caused a revival of interest in the murder attempt.

Despite his efforts, Leo Gately's membership of this House ended in 1989 when he was defeated by Trevor Coomber. His enthusiasm for whatever task he undertook is undeniable. Though his time in here was short, he was an outspoken and vigorous advocate for his constituents. We extend our sympathies to the Gately family and mark his passing with our deepest regret.