




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Perrett, Mr TJ

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 am): Today is something of a unique occasion. As with the recognition of the service and contribution of all former members, it is tinged with sadness. However, the passing of Trevor Perrett, the father of the member for Gympie, brings to mind the fact that few members follow their parents into this House. However, in parliament today we have five other members whose fathers have preceded them: yourself, Mr Speaker, the Premier, the member for Maroochydore, the member for Stafford and the member for Traeger.

Trevor Perrett's time as a member of this House traverses a period of upheaval, uncertainty and change. The manner of his arrival was only surpassed in drama by the manner of his departure. The decade from the late 1980s to the late 1990s was one of the most dramatic in our political history. It saw six premiers lead the state, it saw the end of the Bjelke-Petersen era, and it saw the election of the first Labor government in 32 years. It was Sir Joh's estrangement from the National Party and his resignation as member for Barambah in 1987 that provided the impetus for Trevor Perrett to enter this parliament. An unabashed supporter of the former premier, Trevor Perrett launched his campaign for the seat as a member of the Citizens Electoral Council. As the beneficiary of Labor preferences, he defeated the National Party candidate, Warren Truss, and was elected as member for Barambah.

If there is one thing that can be said about Trevor Perrett it is that he was a true son of the South Burnett region. His family had farmed in the area since the 19th century and he had an affinity with and an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the people of the region. As a grazier, he had served his community and primary industry through the Cattlemen's Union, the Rural Fire Board and the South Burnett National Show Society.

In his first speech in 1988 he referred at length to the challenges facing Queensland's rural communities when he said—

One does not have to travel far from a centre of population to discover hundreds of family farms which are unlikely to be saved from financial disaster by one good season, even a record one. Throughout our primary production areas, farming families are in dire straits—honest, hardworking people in most cases too proud to ask for any kind of handout. They not only face ruin, but are in the midst of it.

His concern for the failure of policies to promote genuine decentralisation, the decline of job opportunities in rural areas, particularly for the young, and the difficulty in maintaining family farms were central to his efforts on behalf of the people of Barambah and its successor electorate, Nanango. In his campaign, Trevor Perrett captured the dissatisfaction with traditional parties. Ironically, he highlighted what he saw as a conflict between members' loyalty to their electors as distinct to party loyalty. It is not unreasonable to suggest that, from the day of his election, the National Party was keen to have Mr Perrett return to the ranks of the party. This coincided with Perrett's own assessment of the CEC and before the 1989 state election he returned to the National Party.

After the election of the Labor government in 1989 Trevor Perrett, held the shadow primary industries portfolio in a number of guises. Upon Rob Borbidge assuming the premiership in 1996, Trevor Perrett became minister for primary industries, fisheries and forestry, a position for which he was well qualified. As minister, he was a strong advocate for the interests of those involved in primary industry not only within the Queensland government but with the newly elected Howard government. At the time his advocacy embraced the impact of drought on rural producers and communities and the consequences of increasing interest rates and he highlighted the importance of assisting producers gain access to finance to help with restocking as the country emerged from drought.

It is ironic that, after a decade in parliament, Trevor Perrett was one of 11 members, both National and Labor, who lost their seat to the One Nation wave that emerged in 1998. It is instructive, however, to note that his successor in Barambah became an Independent upon the implosion of One Nation after only one year and that Nanango returned to the LNP with the election of the present member in 2012.

Trevor Perrett entered this parliament at a time of great change. His decade as a member of this House covered many of the significant political events of the second half of the 20th century. It also coincided with a period of significant challenge for our rural communities. Despite this, he remained a champion of the South Burnett and a vigorous advocate for his constituents.

Today the opposition supports this motion and extends our sympathies to his son, our colleague the member for Gympie; Trevor Perrett's wife, Mimi; his daughter-in-law; Tony's wife, Michele; and his close friend and the former member for Mundingburra, Frank Tanti, and his wife, Ann, who are all in the gallery. Today we say vale to Mr Perrett.