




Speech By
Tony Perrett

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2022

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Perrett, Mr TJ

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (9.57 am): I rise to speak on the condolence motion for my late father, Trevor John Perrett. I thank the Premier, Leader of the Opposition and other members for their kind and considered reflection of his time in this parliament. I also thank members from both sides of this House who offered their support during his illness and eventual passing in July at the age of 80. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for your generosity in hosting us this morning for morning tea in the Lucinda Bar. I acknowledge his wife, Mimi, and my wife, Michele, in the public gallery. I also recognise his close friend and former parliamentary colleague Frank Tanti and his wife, Ann, who are also here. Today I wear his parliamentary gold mace lapel pin and tie he wore as a minister.

As a newly elected member to the House in 2015, the last thought which enters your mind is being here when this parliament offers its condolences for the loss of a parent—in this case, my father. History records this as quite a unique situation where a family member contributes to a motion of this nature. However, I note that there are five other members on both sides of this House who are honoured to follow our fathers into this parliament, including you, Mr Speaker. In making my contribution to this motion, I will reflect on what led him to being elected to this parliament and the impact this had in sparking my interest in politics.

Dad was born in Kingaroy on 2 August 1941. He was the first son of John and Dorothy Perrett of Mount Hope, Kingaroy. Some 3½ years later, his brother Glen joined the family. He attended a small country school called Booie State School. After finishing his education, he worked on the family property, Mount Hope.

The property was grazing and farming land and the base for the Mount Hope Poll Hereford Stud. Breaking, teaching to lead, mustering, growing and harvesting crops were part of a normal week's work. Dad was heavily involved with the showing of Mount Hope stud cattle, winning many Brisbane Royal Show broad ribbons, and sold breeding stock throughout Queensland and New South Wales. He judged cattle across Australia, including at the Poll Hereford Feature Show at Walcha in New South Wales and the Santa Gertrudis Feature Show at Cunnamulla. He was a keen poultry fancier, judging at more than 100 country and royal shows. He bred and showed large teams of poultry, specialising in heavy soft feather breeds such as Australorp, Plymouth Rock and Rhode Island Reds. Over many of these years he held the positions of president of the Kingaroy Show Society, Kingaroy Poultry Club and the Queensland Branch of the Poll Hereford Society of Australia. He was a keen participant and follower of all types of sport. He played squash, tennis and cricket. He was a good leg spin bowler and opening batsman. He travelled to Brisbane each New Year for the Country Week Carnival, on one occasion contributing an opening partnership of 144 for his team, Nanango.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he found an ongoing interest in agripolitics. He was elected to the board of the Cattlemen's Union of Australia, now known as Agforce. He served for many years as a councillor, travelling the state and nation advocating on behalf of the beef industry. He established many long-term friendships as he built a reputation as a fierce representative for an industry which was integral to his upbringing.

In 1988, this interest in agripolitics led him to being elected as the state member for Barambah. We all have varying reasons for how and why we are elected to this parliament. I recall the resignation of the former premier of Queensland, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, in December 1987. Dad was encouraged to contest the by-election held in April 1988 and during this period my political interest commenced. Barambah was a National Party seat held by the former premier for more than 40 years. It was inconceivable that the seat could be lost in a by-election. To the surprise of many, and following a hard-fought election, he won securing a swing of 36 per cent against the National Party candidate, Warren Truss. Labor party preferences ensured he would be the new member for Barambah. He was sworn into the Queensland parliament on 26 April 1988 and made his first speech on 30 August. In that first speech he reflected on his election, when he said—

A few months ago, I had no inclination to sit in this House. That all changed during a period of five weeks, and it is to the credit of the electors of my great electorate that I am here today, delivering my maiden speech. I thank them for their confidence in me. He went on to say—

As one newly come to this House, I commit myself as much to learning and understanding as to advancing opinions. I am as dedicated to the essential values of integrity, truth, honour, justice and dignity as I am to any fresh contributions of my own. He then reflected on his family's connection to the region, when he said—

My family have lived in Barambah for several generations, and I have been fortunate enough to acquire property which my grandfather selected almost 100 years ago. He was able to develop Mount Hope with only his bare hands. With a will to succeed, he forged ahead, just like many more of our pioneers, because in those days people were rewarded for hard work and effort.

He served in this parliament until 1998, holding many positions including as a member of the public accounts committee; temporary chairman of committees; deputy opposition whip; a member of the Queensland Rural Fires Board; shadow minister for primary industries, forestry and rural communities from 1991 to 1996; and minister for primary industries, fisheries and forestry from 1996 to 1998. While minister, he introduced eight bills including changes to the sugar industry, plant protection, tobacco industry restructuring, egg industry restructuring and several amendments to primary industry legislation.

He kept an active interest in the operations of parliament following his departure. He established associations and long-term friendships with members from both sides of the House, including former Speaker John Mickel; Pat Comben, former member for Windsor; Vaughan Johnson, former member for Gregory; Howard Hobbs, former member for Warrego; Dennis Young, the former member for Baroona; and Frank Tanti, former member for Mundingburra to name a few. He was an active participant of the Former Parliamentary Members Association where he was president only a few short years ago. He also took a keen interest in my parliamentary career as the member for Gympie. He was pleased when I was appointed to my current shadow portfolio and would often call to offer his view on current political issues. In closing this condolence motion, I again thank all members for their contribution. I pay my final respects as we pause to remember his service to this parliament.