



Speech by

## Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Thursday, 25 August 2011

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### MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: THE HON. NJ TURNER

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (10.44 am): I rise briefly to put on the record a couple of memories of the late Neil Turner. Mostly I am motivated to do so because of the very strong friendship that Neil had with my predecessor in this place, Marc Rowell. It is no surprise to me to hear the member for Gregory and the member for Southern Downs speak of the high regard they had for Neil Turner, because they came into the parliament with Marc Rowell in late 1989.

After leaving parliament, Neil continued to take a strong interest in politics in Queensland. On a regular basis he would come up to North Queensland to visit Marc Rowell and his wife, Sandy, and stay at their farm. He did that for two reasons. One was to campaign for National Party candidates in North Queensland and the other was to assist with the annual harvest of the lychee crop on the Rowell property. On many occasions when Neil Turner was in North Queensland, either campaigning for the National Party or picking lychees, as he did with the electorate office of the member for Southern Downs he would avail himself of the facilities at the Hinchinbrook electorate office, particularly the kettle and the cups of tea. He would give a fair bit of cheek to the staff of the Hinchinbrook electorate office.

One day in the Hinchinbrook electorate office Neil came across a great character of the Herbert River district, the late Aldo Moretto. Aldo was a long-serving teacher in many of the local small schools in the Herbert River district. He knew every family in the Herbert River district. When I first went to the Herbert River district, I met Aldo and he said, 'Cripps, Cripps: that's not a Herbert River name.' When he met Neil Turner, he repeated the same phrase. He said, 'Turner, Turner: that's not a Herbert River name,' to which Neil Turner said to Aldo Moretto, 'That's correct, but you may know my cousin Tina.' Everyone in the office fell about laughing, while poor old Aldo Moretto found out that he had been the butt of a joke and the victim of Neil Turner's rapier wit.

On one of Neil's trips to North Queensland to help Marc and Sandy Rowell with the harvesting of their lychees, Marc and Neil had returned to the farmhouse early. Neil and Marc had a soft spot for milkshakes. Sandy was still up at the shed packing lychees. Marc and Neil had decided to make themselves a milkshake upstairs in the kitchen. They had the blender out and they had put in all the ingredients; however, before turning the blender on they failed to put on the lid. It had the obvious and understandable consequences. All long-serving members of this House would appreciate the spectacle of Marc Rowell and Neil Turner on their hands and knees in the kitchen trying to clean up milkshake that had gone from the ceiling to the floor. To escape the wrath of Sandy Rowell, they both fled to the Hinchinbrook electorate office in town. That is a story that I will always remember.

Neil Turner made it a frequent habit to visit North Queensland to continue his enduring friendship with Marc Rowell. He loved coming up there and campaigning for the National Party and he loved coming up there to spend time with his friends. He wanted to continue those relationships after he left the parliament and no longer took an active part in politics.

I can imagine the terrible loss of Neil Turner to his family and to his friends in Western Queensland and the areas that he represented on the Sunshine Coast. He will be fondly remembered not only by those people with whom he served in this place but also by those people whose lives he touched in the many roles he undertook in the Queensland community.