



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**THE SENATE**

**PROOF**

**CONDOLENCES**

**Fraser, Rt Hon. John Malcolm, AC, CH**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 23 March 2015**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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## SPEECH

<p><b>Date</b> Monday, 23 March 2015</p> <p><b>Page</b> 22</p> <p><b>Questioner</b></p> <p><b>Speaker</b> Lambie, Sen Jacqui</p>	<p><b>Source</b> Senate</p> <p><b>Proof</b> Yes</p> <p><b>Responder</b></p> <p><b>Question No.</b></p>
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**Senator LAMBIE** (Tasmania) (12:28): I rise to contribute to the condolence motion before the Senate following the death of Malcolm Fraser. The expression 'lucky country' has often been used as a term of endearment and a way to quickly describe why Australia is free, rich and beautiful. Often our nation's critics, including the famous historian Donald Horne, who wrote the words 'lucky country', attribute Australia's prosperity to our location in the world, our natural resources, our stunning environment and the powerful international friends who protect us. And, while there is truth in that argument, some critics give too little credit to the small number of politicians who have truly inspired and led the Australian people. If you agree that Australia is indeed the 'lucky country', then you have to concede that Malcolm Fraser was one of Australia's great political leaders and statesmen who made it so.

On behalf of the people of Tasmania, I sincerely offer my condolences and prayers to Malcolm Fraser's family, friends and colleagues. The people of Tasmania held Malcolm Fraser in high regard and reserved a special place in our hearts for him, and that can be witnessed by the headlines in our state's three main newspapers. *The Advocate*, which has covered west and north-west of Tasmania since 1890, ran a front-page headline which said: 'Tributes Flow to Fraser', and on page 2: 'Fraser understood what Tassie needed'.

*The Examiner* chose the headline 'Towering figure mourned'. On pages 6 and 7, it said: 'Fraser hailed as man of compassion who left indelible mark on history', 'Tributes to statesman', and 'Praise for a strong friend to Tasmania'. *The Mercury*—the voice of Tasmania—ran the headline 'Farewell to a statesman: Malcolm Fraser 1930-2015'. And there was 'Pretty fly for a PM', an article which referred to the fact that Mr Fraser loved Tasmania and fly fishing. Premier Will Hodgeman is quoted as saying that:

Privately, Malcolm had a soft spot for Tasmania. He was a keen angler and kept a fishing shack in the Central Highlands which he enjoyed visiting.

As is the case for all great leaders of our country, many different people will remember Mr Fraser for different events, speeches and actions.

Mr Fraser made great contributions to: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and reconciliation; primary industries; the environment by announcing the banning of whaling; refugees; human rights; world peace; and the welfare of the men and women of our Defence Force. His interest and care for our diggers was foreshadowed in his maiden speech in parliament on 22 February 1956 when he said:

I was very happy to note in His Excellency's Speech that adequate mention was made of defence, the necessity to maintain our armed forces and to develop them in the years to come. I think every Australian at present realizes that we cannot just sit down in our corner of the world and expect other people to allow us to remain quietly by ourselves. We owe a duty to ourselves, to future generations of Australians, and to the rest of the free world to play our part in the maintenance of world freedom and peace; and any effective foreign policy directed towards that end must, quite obviously, envisage an effective defence force.

It is interesting to note that, the day after Mr Fraser died, Australia's official population was calculated by the ABS to be 23,783,810 or approximately 1.2 million short of the total Australian population Mr Fraser talked about in his maiden speech when he said in February 1956:

At present we have slightly over 9,000,000 people in Australia, and when we consider that this country is equal in area to the United States of America, which has over 150,000,000 people, we must realize how sparsely inhabited this continent is. We may not have the same natural riches as the United States, but every honourable member will agree that the possibilities for development in this country are very great indeed. I am sure that I shall live to see the day when we shall have 25,000,000 people in Australia and then we shall be able to look the world in the face far more boldly and play a more effective part in the maintenance of world peace and freedom

Since my election to this parliament as a senator, I had the pleasure of speaking to Mr Fraser for nearly two hours during two separate phone calls before the end of last year. Naturally he rang to speak about the plight of asylum seekers and strongly advocated on their behalf. It was a privilege to hear his voice and experience firsthand his charm and wisdom.

Malcolm Fraser was a loving family man, statesman and visionary. All who followed his life or met with him were left with no doubt that he was a proud Australian full of courage, conviction, confidence and compassion. Malcolm Fraser accomplished the dream he described in his maiden speech. He helped Australia 'look the world in the face far more boldly and play a more effective part in the maintenance of world peace and freedom'. Mr Fraser showed mercy to the oppressed and those down on their luck. May he be granted mercy at the final judgement and rest in peace with the angels after a job well done here in the lucky country.