



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Speech made by Mr Pederick MP

22 May 2014

Motions

JONES, MR HENRY

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:01): I move:

That this house expresses its deep regret at the death of Mr Henry Jones and places on record its appreciation of his long and tireless commitment to the River Murray and the Murray-Darling Basin.

Henry Jones was a quietly-spoken Clayton Bay fisherman who raised his voice against decades of abuse of the Murray-Darling system. In my opinion there was no greater champion of the Murray-Darling than Henry, and the Murray-Darling Basin Plan would not have proceeded without his efforts and determination.

Sadly, Henry passed away on 15 April 2014, aged 72. I was fortunate to attend the celebration of his life with my wife Sally and colleagues, the member for Bragg and the member for Finniss on 19 April 2014. Henry was a true gentleman, always respectful and conveyed an integrity and dignity which impacted on everyone he met. When Henry spoke people listened.

Henry was the face of *The Advertiser's* I Love Murray campaign but he never sought that sort of attention but pursued it because he knew it was right. There are many great anecdotes about Henry but one that I love is about the time he took a tinny to Canberra and cooked fresh mulloway from the Coorong on a barbecue outside Parliament House so that every member of parliament knew his story and his fight.

Ian Doyle, a friend of Henry's, reminisced at his funeral and said that Henry was, above all things, a fisherman and whose story 'is about a quintessential Aussie bloke who shared it for a lifetime with his high school sweetheart'. Throughout his campaign Gloria, who joins us here today with their daughter Christine, was always by Henry's side. It was a partnership, and I thank Gloria for her attendance today.

Henry's great loves, the Murray aside, were his wife Gloria, who he met at Mount Barker High School in 1955, daughters Christine, Julie and Susan, and his five granddaughters and one grandson. I am told that Henry and Gloria's story is one for the romantics. Henry says it was love at first sight.

My wife Sally and I were privileged to attend Henry and Gloria's 50th wedding anniversary, a day we fondly remember as we were embraced into the Jones family fold. Henry first moved to Clayton and started his own commercial fishing operation in 1961. Clayton in 1961 had no roads, no electricity and a population of four when Henry turned up. The early days in Clayton were nothing short of pioneering and Henry and Gloria went on to achieve much for Clayton at little or no cost to the community. For that he also deserves to be remembered.

Ian Doyle, who gave a terrific eulogy, retold stories of Henry's three neighbours. One was Claude Dent who was a knowledgeable man who had given up on civilisation and lived in a cave. According to Henry, Claude enjoyed the company of about 30 cats that were full of fleas and, as Henry remembered, this made having a conversation with him in the cave an interesting visit.

The other two family residents were Mr and Mrs Greenbottle. Henry never found out whether Greenbottle was their real name. There was a rumour that the massive pile of green bottles behind the ambulance where they lived may have had something to do with their surname. Said ambulance was in the middle of a rabbit warren, with a white ferret as a pet—and, yes, the pet was used to provide fresh meat from the warren below. Henry built a very small residence in Clayton, on lot 22, at a cost of £50; to this day, it remains the family home, or 'the love shack'.

When the Postmaster-General's Department was not interested in providing a telephone line to one permanent resident and a couple of shacks at Clayton, Henry decided to build it himself. Henry and Gloria also ran the local store and oversaw the vision, financing and construction of a \$180,000 Clayton community hall.

The hall committee, of which Henry was president and the foreman for the build, saw its fair share of dramas, including a visit from union officials, who Henry politely chased up Clayton Hill, stating, 'If you bastards come around here and try to close us down, I'll use you for yabby bait.' One of those 'bastards' was Norm Gallagher. The community hall was opened in 1985 and is one of the many community-based developments and projects in which Henry and Gloria played pivotal roles.

The Yabby City story is one for the ages. Through processing, retailing and cooking fish and yabbies Gloria and Henry had caught, Yabby City became a hotspot to dine out and a trailblazer in South Australia as a tourist venture. Celebrities, politicians and many high-profile people came from far and wide to try Henry's yabbies. According to Ian Doyle, to get in for Saturday night or Sunday lunch, you had to book three months in advance.

Henry established the Country Fire Service in Clayton, and was captain there for 20 years. Gloria drove the school bus for some 30-plus years, and Henry played for and coached the Milang Football Club. Their devotion to the Clayton and Lower Lakes communities is nothing short of amazing.

The early days in Clayton were the reason that in future years Henry fought so hard for the Murray-Darling system. Clayton was pristine, and anytime Henry hopped into his boat and pushed away from the shore, he travelled into a wilderness of birds, fish, animals and a healthy aquatic system. Henry was not going to allow future generations to grow up accepting that dying ecosystems were the norm.

As a commercial fisherman operating in the Lower Lakes and the lower Murray system for more than half a century, Henry witnessed first-hand the declining health of the environment and river systems. When drought closed the Murray Mouth for the first time in 1981, Henry decided enough was enough and that it was time to act. According to Henry:

Our problems started long before the drought, but the drought made it bigger and really brought it into focus. While the drought was on...the people were walking around with their shoulders down, and the kids were the same. No laughter...all they talked about was water and when are we going to get water. The floods brought the water back, and all of a sudden the shoulders were back, the arms were swinging and eyes were wide open. It just proved to me beyond a shadow of doubt that you need a healthy environment and healthy rivers to have a healthy community.

Henry fought tirelessly over more than three decades for river and Lower Lakes reform, and he took his dedicated campaigning to prime ministers, premiers, state and federal ministers and anyone else he thought was blocking the reform necessary to save the Murray.

Henry spent those over 30 years lobbying, debating, encouraging, addressing, being threatened and abused, trips to Canberra and the Murray Mouth and thousands of meetings. He faced strong challenges from the powerful irrigator groups, but people started to listen.

As described earlier, Henry has often been described as a man of few words, yet when he did speak he used his words wisely and people listened. His experience and knowledge of the region, his fishery and the river made you want to listen.

Henry was a man who gave freely of his time in his cause and for his community and our great river system. Henry joined a number of committees, all of which benefited greatly from his contribution. Henry was a longstanding representative on many Murray-Darling Basin Commission committees, and later Murray-Darling Basin Authority committees, the Murray-Darling Basin Community Reference Group, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority Native Fish Advisory Panel, the River Murray Advisory Committee, the Living Murray Community Reference Group, and the Basin Community Committee. Henry was also a spokesman for the River, Lakes and Coorong Action Group and a member of the Lower Murray Drought Reference Group—I don't know when he had time to fish, quite frankly.

In Henry's opinion, the Murray-Darling Basin Authority's draft basin plan did not allocate enough water to South Australia. Towards the end of the fight for the River Murray, Henry copped a lot of abuse from people upstream. Meetings were so hostile in places like Griffith and Leeton they were like a war zone. Ian Doyle recalled at Henry's funeral:

At one of these meetings, a big redheaded bloke confronted him with a scarlet face and steam coming out of his nostrils, and was firmly pushing his right shoulder. 'Henry,' he said, 'you are in a room full of friends, but none of them are yours.'

Henry Jones should be remembered as the man who saved the Murray. The culmination of his 31-year campaign happened in 2012 in Canberra when Henry stood by former minister for water Tony Burke's side to see the bill passed and the plan implemented. Such was Henry's involvement in the Murray-Darling Basin plan, former minister Burke travelled to Clayton to deliver Henry and Gloria a copy of the basin plan, in which he wrote:

Dear Henry, more than a century in the making, but we got there. This is one of the most important tasks I'll ever be given, but it never could have happened without you. Generations of the future will always owe a debt to Henry Jones. With kind regards, Tony Burke 20.2.13.

I first met Henry and Gloria soon after getting elected in 2006, and I soon learned of their vital contribution in all things in the Lower Murray and Lakes, especially when the system was beginning to be gripped by drought. One of my proudest moments as the member for Hammond, and at the time shadow minister for the River Murray, includes launching the Jones Lookout at Clayton Bay, in honour of Henry, Gloria and their family in September 2009.

Henry was a lifelong volunteer and deserves every piece of recognition he received and will continue to receive. His hard work and determination was recognised in 2008 when he received the Pride of Australia Medal. Henry was a finalist in the South Australia Senior Australian of the Year Award in 2014 for his work in water conservation, and was given a lifetime contribution at Alexandrina Council's Year of the Farmer celebrations in 2012.

In 2013, he received the River Murray Medal, awarded by the Murray-Darling Basin Authority, for his services devoted to protecting the health of the River Murray. I understand this was the first time this particular award had been given to a community member in 160 years since it was first established in 1853.

I was fortunate enough to attend a number of his and Gloria's Hall of Fame fishing industry awards recently, where they were both recognised at a state and national level. Henry played pivotal roles in numerous advances and changes in the fishing industry, and it was great to see him recognised. He led the way and others followed.

While president of the Southern Fisherman's Association he, along with others and with the help of Gloria, developed the world's first environmental management plan for a whole of fishery in the Lakes and Coorong, as well as receiving the Marine Stewardship Certification for his multi-species fishery. Henry was also awarded life membership of the Lakes and Coorong Fishery.

I was privileged to call Henry a friend, and it was an honour to work with him on issues impacting his beloved Lower Lakes and Coorong fishery and the River Murray. His passion, his dedication and his enthusiasm for the River Murray and Lower Lakes and Coorong fishing industry were second to none, and he will be greatly missed by many. Luckily, his work will continue, with his L21 fishing licence remaining in the family, with daughter Christine and grandson Justin taking over. Remarkably, that will be six generations of fishers, something of which Henry was enormously proud.

I met with Henry before he passed away and, even in those final months, he was still instructing me on the work that was needed to protect the river system and keep the Lower Lakes a freshwater system, and looking to the future. Henry was always optimistic that water to be delivered as part of the basin plan would improve the environment in the Lower Murray. Henry said:

I can see a rosy future for the river. It's never going to be pristine, it's a working river, there's still going to be irrigation, there's still going to be things grown because there has to be. But at least there's a cap on it now, and there's water set aside to look after the environment, and there's a chance that we'll have something to pass on that we're proud of.

He was a truly great man and it is a truly great family. It is a real privilege to have known Henry. As I reflect on one of those meetings at Langhorne Creek one day, when Henry was speaking to a group of Eastern States irrigators (Victorian and New South Wales irrigators), I was left in absolutely no doubt and they were not left in any doubt—and that is probably why he had no friends up there—on Henry's views about the River Murray that it should have a freshwater recovery. He did his utmost and he won on that scale, because I believe in the future and that what Henry did will keep that freshwater recovery. Long may we remember and may we never forget. I commend the motion.

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton) (11:16): I rise in support of the motion moved by the member for Hammond that this chamber expresses its deep regret and sadness at the death of

Mr Henry Jones and places on record its appreciation of his long and tireless commitment to the River Murray and the Murray-Darling Basin.

I acknowledge Gloria and Christine here today and other friends of the Jones family who are here. It gives me great pleasure to speak—and 'pleasure' might not be the right word because how can it possibly be a pleasure when such a great person has passed away? I am very pleased to be able to rise in support of the motion.

I will give a few recollections of Henry. I first met Henry when I was the agriculture minister and had cause to travel down to the lake system down there in particular. I guess we should put in context that this was 2009. We had had four or five years of the most unprecedented drought in anyone's living memory. As the member for Hammond mentioned, what we saw at that time through that drought was the exacerbation of the problem from many years before that, and Henry noted and knew that—that we had been taking too much water out of the system. The drought was unprecedented, but most certainly it was exacerbated by over 100 years of extraction of water from that particular system.

It was not a very pleasant time at all. You could see the fractures occurring within the community with respect to the lack of water, the building of what we called bunds at that time, blockages within the river, and there was great debate about whether that was the right thing to do. They were extraordinary times, and extraordinary times needed extraordinary actions. We can debate whether they were right or wrong at that particular point in time, but the simple fact is that it required not just a whole-of-government approach but a whole-of-parliament approach, a whole-of-community approach and a whole-of-state approach, and that is where Henry was absolutely instrumental. He was the heart and soul not only of the Clayton region but also that entire area down there.

He was a fifth generation fisherman. I have an affinity with all people who fish, contrary to some popular beliefs around the place, whether they be commercial or recreational fishers. We had that rapport from the first instant because I love to talk about fishing. The first thing I said to Christine today was, 'Who is catching today while you are here?' My relationship with Henry grew a lot stronger when I had the privilege to become the state's water minister. It was not such a good time to be the water minister because, as you would realise, there was not that water around. Water had not fallen in the catchment area for an extended period of time, and we were seeing things no-one ever thought they would see with respect to the impact it was having on the environment of the river system.

We worked very closely with Henry and groups. I would not have had to fundraise at this last election if I had a dollar for every time I travelled the river system to meet with communities and speak with people about the circumstances and how, as a collective, we could go about it.

The member for Hammond also said—and it might seem to be quite correct, given the meeting that occurred upstream where, to paraphrase, 'There are lots of friends here Henry, but you ain't one of them'—that through his work with the Community Reference Group he had lots of friends along the length and breadth of the river. He knew that for us and for his future, for future generations, for the future of all the communities along the river (and he is right, it is and will continue to be a working river), things needed to change. He had lots of friends along the length and breadth of the river who also realised that there needed to be changes made.

Henry was at the forefront of understanding that it was not an upstream versus downstream debate. It was not an irrigators versus environmentalists debate; it was a debate about a system, an interconnected system, and the health of that system is only as good as the health of the sum of its parts. So, it was just as important to do work upstream as it was to make sure that the work being done downstream was able to cater for the additional water that was required.

The member for Hammond also said that the Murray-Darling Basin Plan would not have proceeded without Henry Jones—it would have, it is just that we would not have the plan we have today if it was not for Henry Jones. I do recall, too—and I think this might be the right word—some of the anguish Henry felt when the Murray-Darling Basin Plan first came out and science proved and showed that there was not going to be enough water. It would have been so easy for Henry to say, 'Look, in the past we had no water coming down and this is going to give us 2,600, 2,750 gigalitres or whatever it is; that's better than what we could ever have imagined'.

But he was understanding enough and intelligent enough to realise that the science that was produced by the Murray-Darling Basin Plan was still only going to return parts of that river to a moderate to fair health—not the level of health that was required to make sure that this system would be able to sustain future populations for many years to come. So we would have got a

Murray-Darling Basin Plan without Henry Jones. The point is that we would not have got the plan we have today; we would not have got as good a plan as we have today.

Many people have spoken about Henry in that time, and he did share a very good relationship with Tony Burke and I agree with Tony's views that Henry was absolutely instrumental in the development and enshrinement of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan as law. I have had a look at some of the things Henry did and I do agree—and I do not always agree with the member for Hammond; he knows that, but I like the man—that it is a wonder with all the things that he did that he was actually able to go and catch fish.

The one that really took my attention was that he was coach of the Milang Football Club. I judge football clubs—and I visit a lot of games—by how good their barbecues are and not so much by how good their football team is. I can tell you where the best hotdog or hamburger is at any amateur league game here. But the Milang Football Club must have had a good barbecue because if its coach and its chairman was a fisherman, I could imagine those pieces of fish in between bread at those particular football matches, and I would have loved to have been there.

When you have a look at all the things that Henry did—a member of the Community Reference Group, the Native Fish Strategy Group; the Murray Advisory Group, Dean Brown's Drought Relief Group, which I worked with for an extended period of time as well—it is just amazing the work that he was able to achieve in a single lifetime, and many people or a group of people would never achieve as much over many, many lifetimes.

It was very sad that Henry passed away, but one thing that he has done is left an indelible stamp, and the people of South Australia can be thankful for the role Henry played because we here today and future generations will benefit from the legacy of the work undertaken by Henry Jones.

I also acknowledge the role he played as the face of the Save the River Murray campaign. It was an outstanding role and, as the member for Hammond said, he never sought that type of exposure but he did it because it was necessary and it was important and there was no more appropriate person to be that ambassador, if you like, for the face of the Save the River Murray campaign. He worked tirelessly for that cause with the Premier, with me while I was the minister and others to make sure that we were able to send the very important message that this is a fight that we cannot afford to lose and, as a consequence of the involvement of Henry Jones, we did not lose that fight.

He also said too—as I think the member for Hammond said—that we need to be not only mindful but diligent in making sure that we continue to in turn ensure that the amount of water comes down, that we do have an operating system, that that system is healthy and that Australia as a whole benefits from having that healthy river system. I just want to finish off by saying to Gloria and Christine, who are here today, to the entire family, I am very sorry for your loss. You lost a husband, a father, a grandfather, a friend of so many and South Australia lost a giant of a man. Vale, Henry Jones.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr PENGILLY (Finniss) (11:26): I would also like to acknowledge the presence of Mrs Gloria Jones and Christine in the gallery. I pass on my best wishes to them on the loss of Henry. However I, along with the member for Hammond and the member for Bragg, were fortunate enough to be able to attend Henry's celebration of life service at Clayton Bay on Easter Saturday. The member for Hammond has passed on many of the recollections from that day. However, on that day, the numbers were up to some conjecture, but somewhere between 600 and 800 people attended Henry's farewell. It was a good fishing day.

I just found it an amazing experience, along with Sally Pederick and my wife, Jan, as well. We were lucky that we were able to go. We were warned at the start that the number of eulogies would exceed the numbers in a cricket side, and I suspect if we had all got up and spoken as we would have liked to, we probably would still be going, because it was one of those days when people just wanted to express their thoughts.

Ian Doyle did a sensational job in his eulogy, along with Henry's family, of course, but to me, it typified the Jones family of Clayton Bay and it typified Henry's contribution that so many people wanted to be there and perhaps that was no better expressed than at the conclusion in the hall where we lined the road. Some 600 to 800 people lined each side of the road as Henry left for the last time on his way to do a lap around Milang Oval, I understand. That was probably one of

Henry's weak points, that he was a Port supporter, I might add, but much of that has been discussed before.

I had quite a bit to do with Henry and Gloria in the last few years particularly, but my recollection of Henry was that he was imposing. From his lifetime of hard physical work, he had arms and hands on him with the strength of a bullock, quite frankly. He was a massively powerful man and the work he did leads to that, and if you do hard physical work, that is how you end up. Henry was naturally strong, but he was not only strong physically, he was strong mentally, and that was the great thing about Henry.

Henry and Gloria made a pretty unique partnership, quite frankly. I would have thought that there would be some consideration to renaming Clayton Jonesville or something like that because really they made Clayton. They built Clayton and made it what it is and that can never be taken away. As long as people are settled in Clayton, the Jones family will be around and will be well known.

Henry was a man who had integrity. He had knowledge, he had passion, he had devotion, and through all of that he was quietly spoken, but if you talked with Henry, or if you listened to Henry, more to the point, rather than talk, you knew exactly where he was coming from. People up and down the river got that, including the ones that the member for Hammond spoke about.

There is no doubt that across the broad spectrum of government, whether it be state or federal, ministers, prime ministers, the whole gambit, knew exactly where they should be going after they had a session with Henry. That was the type of fellow he was, and that was his integrity. He knew what had to be done, he knew what needed to be done and he worked quietly towards getting that done.

I suspect, and I am not being poetic or anything else, but if Henry had been in another generation and had fought in World War I or World War II, he would have won the VC. He should have got the VC or something similar for what he did for the River Murray and the lakes. That was the character of the man. He was a unique, iconic Australian, and that lives on through his family. He was an incredible man. I am very privileged to have had the honour of knowing Henry and Gloria. I regard it as a great honour.

Equally, can I just say that there were no greater friends to Gloria and Henry than Dean and Rosslyn Brown. They are great friends, and unfortunately the Browns were overseas on the day of Henry's service. I am sure that if Dean had been there and spoken, we would have gone on for another three hours. However, they are great friends and they will continue to be great friends, and I think that is an enduring friendship that will never go away.

The Jones family are very generous of spirit. I attended numerous barbeques and fundraisers, particularly in the Hindmarsh Valley Hall, where the first people to turn up were Henry and Gloria, and they would unload an esky of mullet and start cooking. That was Henry and Gloria's contribution and that is what they liked to do. They could do it and they did it—they were just fantastic. They just got on with it, quite frankly. That was the way they operated.

I do not want to go on too long because I know there are others to speak, and I want to give them the opportunity so we can get through, but Henry Jones was a doer, not a talker. He was a doer. If he had to speak, he spoke because he knew what had to be done. It was a question of getting on with what had to be done, not waffling around, not having 55 committees, and not going back for inquiries. Henry said, 'Well, this is what you've got to do. This is what needs to be done. Get on with it.'

I know that Australia was so fortunate to have Henry during the 10-year drought, and I think the member for Colton alluded to that in his remarks. They were so lucky, but we were so lucky to have him. At the time of the drought, part of my electorate was in Goolwa and the river, and I know that the member for Hammond and others were heavily involved in the river, but I will always, always remember Henry Jones. He made a profound impact on me, and I say: vale Henry.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Premier) (11:33): I rise in support of the motion moved by the member for Hammond that this house expresses its deep regret and sadness at the death of Mr Henry Jones and places on record its appreciation of his long and tireless commitment to the River Murray and Murray-Darling Basin, and I do so at a number of different levels.

At a personal level, I do wish to pass on my condolences to Henry's wife Gloria and his family. I was privileged to make their acquaintance in that very long but ultimately successful campaign to restore the River Murray to health. I think anyone who met Henry was struck by his silent and quiet sense of dignity but incredible sense of power, so he was like the river in a way—a very great man, but not an overbearing man. You just had this enormous sense of the power of his presence. It is hard to imagine him gone, and it must be an enormous hole that he has placed in your lives.

Henry's legacy will have a lasting impact on this state as well as the local community. I think many of you have recounted that he was the first permanent resident at Clayton. His dedication, alongside Gloria, in fighting to retain the health of his beloved river, the Lakes and Coorong will benefit generations of South Australians. As we know, Henry was a commercial fisherman for most of his adult life. This is a story he told eloquently in the advertising and public communication material that we produced for the purposes of campaigning for healthy river. It is worth going back and looking at that material because these are beautifully produced ads and they hopefully give you a lovely memory of Henry.

He had a deep connection and understanding of a unique and iconic part of Australia. He regularly guided officials and dignitaries around the site, sharing his knowledge with his legendary generosity of spirit. As a result of Henry's passion, he, of course, was a tireless campaigner for the health and prosperity of this region. I know on all sides of politics we can appreciate how important this fight was and still is because there is always an ever present risk of reversal when you are at the end of the river and people are making decisions about what goes on upstream.

Henry tirelessly urged all sides of politics to take our environment and health of the river and Coorong and Lower Lakes seriously and was central to everything we have achieved to secure the health of this important area. He understood the balance between agriculture, irrigation, fishing, environment and river communities, and he was truly a voice for the region. In a way, in one man, he reflected everything that the member for Colton and myself were trying to achieve when we were trying to unify the whole of the state in this campaign. We knew we had to bring together irrigators and conservationists, we knew we had to bring together the city and the country, we knew we had to bring together the whole of the state because we are a relatively small voice in a large nation and there were powerful interests that were lined up against us.

Henry cared deeply for his community and his river. I think this does demonstrate how one person can make such a substantial difference. It is no accident that the attitude of the federal government changed after the federal environment minister met with Henry Jones. Indeed, the federal environment minister, after he met with Henry, started referring to the things that Henry had said during the meeting. I am told that Henry once said:

It's our obligation to protect 60 million years of evolution.

The river is more than a sewer, it is more than a pipe that provides water, and it's more than a playground.

It's a wonderful living ecosystem that provides habitat to many living things.

It's our obligation to pass it on.

Henry and his family have ensured, through their tireless dedication and passion, that these sentiments will not be forgotten. He will be deeply missed by family, friends and community members from all sides of politics.

When we got to the end of this very important campaign in trying to lift the amount of water that was going to come down stream from 2,750 gegalitres to 3,200 gegalitres, it was a massive additional contribution. If you look at the result that has been achieved in the legislative instruments, you can see where we were and you can see Henry Jones and the campaign's contribution, because it is in black and white.

You can see the bit that has been strapped onto what was proposed to be the plan and what now is the plan. That difference, if you want to turn it into dollar terms, has got a value in the order of about \$3 billion. An enormous amount of that accrued for the benefit of South Australia. So, Henry Jones and those that campaigned with him are the \$3 billion men and women. They were the ones that secured that, and that is a massive amount of resource to be able to secure from the federation in South Australia's interests.

When we got to the end of that process, as there inevitably is with any campaign of this sort, there were people who were saying, 'Perhaps we could have got more. Perhaps it's not enough: we needed to have secured more water, more commitments or a better deal.' I can remember that debate occurring and, I must say, I was fearful about whether some of the more

extreme elements would say, 'This deal wasn't enough,' and it might unravel and the community might not understand what an historic deal was done.

However, the daily paper interviewed Henry Jones and asked what Henry Jones thought of the deal, and he said it was a good deal. Once Henry had spoken, all of the criticism ceased, and that is because he was trusted. His judgement was a judgement that people respected. Like any agreement, when you are negotiating between governments in a contested area, there are compromises that had to be made and I am sure it is not perfect. We have to continue to be vigilant to ensure that it delivers everything that it promised, but Henry Jones warranted it and that is certainly good enough for me, and I think it was good enough for many people in South Australia.

The member for Colton and I made many deep and enduring friendships as a consequence of that campaign, not necessarily always on our side of politics. Indeed, I can remember often going to the Riverland and many people saying, 'Look, you're doing a great job on the river. I'm not going to vote for you, but you're doing a great job on the river.' There is no doubt it was tiger country, but that was not our role. Our role was to advocate for South Australians and I think it was a tremendous result, and Henry was front and centre in achieving those things for our state.

Once again, I pass on my condolences to the family and thank this great South Australian for the contribution he made on what is one of the most important public policy issues that has faced our state in many a long decade.

Mr WHETSTONE (Chaffey) (11:42): I, too, rise to acknowledge the passing of Mr Henry Jones and his unrivalled passion and commitment to the River Murray and its Lower Lakes system. I also acknowledge Gloria and family members in the gallery today. On reflection, I met Henry in Canberra in about the late 90s. It was very much a learning curve for me as an advocate for the river, and it was all about river reform. For myself, back in my earlier days as a representative for the River Murray, its communities and its irrigators, I learned very quickly that Henry's passion was about the sustainability of the River. As members have said, it was not just about the environment, it was about the working river and how it needed to be cared for—how it had to be a working river from the top to the bottom.

In saying that, obviously as an advocate for the reform of the river, I used to use some of the older members of river communities as sounding boards or sounding drums, and Henry was one of those people. He was there for the benefit particularly of his patch in the earlier days. It was about what was going on down at the tell-tale end of the river system, and that was the lakes, the Coorong and the lower end of the river. There was also a very knowledgeable advocate for the river in Jack 'Salty' Seekamp, may he rest in peace. He was also one of the most knowledgeable people I had ever come across with regard to the river. Sadly, we have lost another good man to the river, as we did with Jack Seekamp, and it is something I continue to treat with sincere passion, because the river is so important not only to this state but also to the people of Australia.

Henry Jones dedicated his life, almost, to advocating for the health and sustainability of the Murray-Darling Basin, but in doing that he became a champion of the river. He became the voice of the river here in South Australia.

I have heard others say that he was met with hostility when he travelled the length of the river, but he soon gained respect because it was not about him being a South Australian looking for more water; he was a South Australian looking for a fair deal to benefit all river users, not just those in South Australia.

His advocacy for the river was underpinned by being a commercial fisherman in the Lower Lakes and Lower Murray. He lived and breathed the industry. As I described him, he was a walking barometer for the river system and its ecosystem. As a fisherman, he could see what was going on: he could see the workings of the river, the water quality and the rising and dropping of water levels. He always had an opinion that was based on the facts he saw on a daily basis in combination with 50 years within the industry. He also travelled to the Riverland to visit family and to holiday, and it also gave him a greater knowledge of the river system.

These are the foundations upon which Henry expanded his knowledge of the vast area of the river here in the Murray-Darling Basin. Henry witnessed firsthand the degradation of the river down at the lower end because that was where there were the tell-tale signs of the river's health. In some regard, the Lower Lakes area was treated as a sewer; the Lower Lakes area was treated as a faraway place by many who used the river system. I soon learnt that anyone who wanted to advocate, as the member for Colton and others have, realises that it is not just a river for some: it is a river for all.

As has already been said, along the way in 1981 Henry actively voiced his concerns about the health of the system. He gently moved around, spreading his stories and spreading his concerns and by doing that he brought people with him and people listened. He gave a calm explanation of what was going on while moving around through government departments, communities, the fishing community, the irrigation community and the environmental sector as well. As many have said today, if there was a committee with the word 'Murray' in it, Henry was on it.

In the last 10 years, I had the privilege of attending many hundreds of meetings and workshops with Henry. For me, it was always a task that when I got to meetings I always made sure that I sat next to him so that I could use him as a sounding board for ideas and concerns. I was able to learn quietly, but I was also able to take away a message that Henry had instilled in me during some of those meetings. Henry was a quiet achiever. He always listened to others and he always went about his business as a decent and genuine person. He always put his family first at heart and the river second at heart. One thing he said to me many times was that good leadership and action will put flow into the river; politics and spin were what he feared would slow the progress of reform for the river.

I am pleased that Henry's efforts were recognised by a number of awards—many awards. As the member for Finnis said, if there were a Victoria Cross for presence and advocacy for reform in the Murray-Darling Basin, he would have been awarded it, but for Henry it was not about recognition. He had a role in the South Australian Fishing Industry Council, he was a spokesperson on many groups, particularly the Lower Lakes groups and the Coorong action groups, and he was a consistent attendee at many hundreds, if not into the high hundreds, of meetings.

Henry was always about getting the best outcome for the environment and the river communities. As I said, he understood that it was a working river, and he needed always to present a fair and balanced argument. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Henry for his work, his tireless efforts and his passion. Above all, it is for his passion that he will be remembered. To this house, I vow to continue the advocacy on which the river, the people and the health rely. Henry's work will live on.

Mr WILLIAMS (MacKillop) (11:50): One of the real pleasures we get from being elected to this place is the people we meet as we go about our business. Henry Jones is one of those great South Australians I got to meet, and I am delighted to have met him, to have known him and to have observed him. I am somewhat saddened to be here today supporting this motion.

I first came across Henry and Gloria when I think Dorothy Kotz was the minister for the environment—so it was a fair while ago—and we did a trip down to Clayton. I cannot recall the exact issue at the time, but I do remember that Henry put on a bit of a luncheon for us. One of the dishes he served turned out to be European carp turned into something not only edible but very tasty. That has always remained with me; I have never had that experience anywhere else.

What fascinated me about Henry, and one of the lessons I think we can learn from Henry Jones, is that I do not believe that he was university educated. I do not believe that he would be able to wear the title of a scientist, but I think that he had a greater knowledge and understanding of the river, its needs and its daily moods than anybody.

He achieved this because he did not live in the environment, he lived with his environment. He observed it 24/7 for 365 days a year over a lifetime. He knew every mood and every nuance of the river, and he knew what was important. But over that lifetime, he had obviously observed a decline, and that concerned him and, being the man he was, he became passionate, he became an advocate for that environment he lived with.

The millennium drought did two things for Henry: it fired up his passion and his enthusiasm for that environment even more than it had been previously and it also gave him a platform to engage with others, and he used that with great skill. I think that there is a lesson for us all to learn from the work Henry did and what he achieved for his backyard, his beloved Lower Lakes and river system, and for all of South Australia and all of Australia.

To Gloria, Christine and your family, please accept my personal condolences and those from the people of MacKillop, whom I represent here. It is with sadness that I say these words, but can I say that it has been a great pleasure of mine to have known Henry and yourselves. Vale, Henry.

Motion carried.