



Speech by

KAREN STRUTHERS

MEMBER FOR ARCHERFIELD

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Death of Mr D. J. Sherrington

Ms STRUTHERS (Archerfield—ALP) (9.57 a.m.): It is with both sadness and honour that I speak about the life of Doug Sherrington. I am joined by the member for Sunnybank, who also represents parts of Doug's former seat, in acknowledging that we have both benefited from Doug's hard work. Doug was held in high esteem around the electorate of Archerfield, especially in the older suburbs of Coopers Plains and Salisbury that he served for many years. In seeking preselection myself, I knew that I had to prove to our Labor stalwarts in the area that I would not forget the Labor values and traditions that former members like Doug Sherrington had lived and breathed. There was a sense that no woman was going to get charge of this patch unless she had had her hands dirtied and unless she had the courage to stand up for the battlers. If she was not down to earth, she was out. I know that Doug and his mates had a bit of a say in whether or not I got preselected in the area.

Doug fought hard to hold back the tide of job losses and redundancies that began to emerge in the 1970s. He was one of the many Labor men who, as a young man, attended the Central Technical College in the city near Parliament House, and as a trades assistant and linesman, Doug knew the vulnerability of low-wage earners to economic conditions and the whim of employers. He fought hard to protect the rights of workers.

As others have mentioned, Doug was State member from 1960 to 1974—a time when members did not get the sorts of entitlements that make our job easier today. He worked out of his home in Cooper Plains with his wife, Topsy, also very ably filling the role of State member. As the Opposition Leader mentioned earlier, Doug would drive around the electorate in his car. I remember as a kid hearing the loud speakers as the car drove up and down the street. Once a month the Salvation Army would drive up and down our street and, in pre-election times, Doug would drive up and down the street. When we heard the noise we did not know if it was the Salvos or Doug, but we knew there was a racket outside. Doug was well known around the electorate and, like Len Ardill, he was recognised by his car.

He and Topsy were both well known for never turning anyone away without giving them some sort of decent support. They assisted my family in the early seventies, and I know that my mother held Doug in particularly high regard. As the Premier and others have stated and as local members tell me, Doug was one of the first strong greenies in the party. Many locals have told me the story of his going to a State conference armed with his policy on the environment, only to have Jack Egerton and others argue against it, saying that there were no votes in conservation. Recent history has shown us that, in this instance, Doug was right and Jack was wrong.

Doug's Labor mates have also told me that, in spite of his being a loyal life member of the party, in the past decade or so he became very disillusioned with politics and the ALP. He was very worried about economic reforms and the inability of Governments to provide full employment. His mates and others close to him were being cast aside from the railways and other industries, and Doug was very sad and disappointed that none of us were able to do much to stop this from happening.

Doug was respected for being a conscience for the ALP in our area and he will be very sadly missed. I wish his family well during their period of grief. As other members have stated this morning, Doug was an accomplished poet. I have had the pleasure of hearing locals reciting some of Doug's

poetry to me. This morning I thought it would be apt to pay respect to him by reading a short extract from not one of his poems but one that pays tribute to Doug and others like him. It reads—

"I think continually of those who were truly great
What is precious is never to forget
The names of those who in their lives fought for life
Who wore at their hearts the fire's centre
Born of the sun they travelled a short while towards the sun
And left the vivid air signed with their honour."

May you be at peace, Doug.
