



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Tuesday, 22 February 2005

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## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

### Deaths of Mr GB Kehoe and Mr PND White

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late former state member for Southport and former federal member for McPherson, Mr Peter Nicholson Duckett White, and the late Gregory Brian Kehoe, a former member of the parliament of Queensland.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentlemen the above resolution, together with an expression of the profound sympathy and sorrow of the members of the parliament of Queensland for the loss they have sustained.

Gregory Brian Kehoe was born on 1 May 1917 in Warwick. Mr Kehoe attended St Patrick's Convent and Christian Brothers College in Gympie before attending Brisbane Teachers Training College. Mr Kehoe joined the Queensland Public Service immediately after leaving school. He was admitted as a solicitor in the Queensland Supreme Court and later as a magistrate in the Small Claims Tribunal in Brisbane.

Between 1941 and 1945, Mr Kehoe served in the Australian military force, proudly serving his country in Papua New Guinea with the 42nd Battalion. On his return home to Queensland he resumed his career in the Public Service. He represented the residents of Gympie on employment related issues through his roles as secretary to the Gympie branch of the State Service Union and as a delegate to the Gympie Trades and Labor Council and the Brisbane Trades and Labor Council.

Mr Kehoe was actively involved in the Australian Labor Party since 1947, and held the position of state vice-president in 1957. Mr Kehoe was elected to the Queensland parliament as the member for the then electorate of Nash on 7 March 1953. In his maiden speech in this House he highlighted important welfare issues for Queensland, including the development of Queensland's primary industries, the advantages of irrigation, the need for well-managed farm land and the importance of transport and power infrastructure in regional development.

These issues, although raised over 50 years ago in this House, remain significant for regional Queensland today and are indeed ones that concern my government. Mr Kehoe's funeral service will be held today at the Holy Family Catholic Church, Runaway Bay. I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of all members of this House to his family.

Peter Nicholson Duckett White was born in Queensland on 19 January 1936. He completed his secondary education at The Southport School on the Gold Coast. During this time he demonstrated considerable talent and on his application for admission to the Royal Military College Duntroon his headmaster wrote—

He is our most outstanding sportsman and leader. I am sure he will always be a credit to this school.

Peter was accepted to the Royal Military College Duntroon, entering in January 1954. Again, he excelled at sport and leadership and was the recipient of numerous awards. He graduated from Duntroon in December 1957 and entered the Royal Australian Infantry, initially joining the 11 National Service Battalion. Peter served his country in many overseas postings, and was awarded a Military Cross for his courage and leadership during military operations in Bien Hoa, Vietnam, during the 1968 Tet offensive. The citation on Peter's Military Cross referred specifically to 'his care of his men'.

In 1973, having attained the rank of lieutenant colonel and commanding 1RAR, Townsville, Peter chose to resign from the Australian Army and return to Southport with his family. At this time, Peter became active in politics, and was elected as the Liberal member for the seat of Southport on 12 November 1977. Many very distinguished people were elected to the House on that occasion. Peter served one term in the Queensland parliament and from his maiden speech it was apparent that he would vigorously hold the government of the day to account.

In his first speech to parliament, Peter also emphasised the importance of primary industries and resources to the state's future and the benefits of coordinated service delivery, as well as advocating for improved infrastructure in his electorate of Southport. In the time that he served in the state parliament, Peter became known for his strong personal convictions, taking a stand on corruption 10 years before the advent of the Fitzgerald inquiry.

Following his term in the Queensland parliament, Peter was encouraged to enter the federal arena, and represented the seat of McPherson from 1981 to 1990, including a period as shadow minister for defence. After retiring from politics in 1990, Peter worked as a consultant and businessman, and maintained an active interest in sport until his recent illness.

In both his military and political careers, Peter White's service was distinguished by leadership and loyalty. Peter is survived by his widow, Shirley, his children Kylie and Nigel, and their families. I extend my deepest sympathies and that of all members of this House to his family.