



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: HON. AM HODGES

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.38 am): It is my pleasure to rise to second the motion moved by the Premier for the late Hon. Allen Maxwell Hodges, the member for Gympie from 1957 to 1979. In honouring the life of Max Hodges, I am reminded of the words of James Russell Lowell, who said—

Compromise is a good umbrella, but a poor roof. It is temporary expedient, often wise in party politics, almost sure to be unwise in statesmanship.

Today we mourn the death and honour the memory of a true statesman. Max Hodges was a man of integrity and conviction. In the words of his son, Russell, and family who join us today in the Speaker's Gallery, he was a gentleman in the true sense of the word.

Allen Maxwell Hodges was born in Brisbane on 11 February 1917 to Arthur John Hodges and Helen Allen Mitchell. Max was born with politics in his blood. His great-grandfather William Mitchell was the member for Maryborough from 1904 to 1908. But that is where the similarity ends. While Max's great-grandad was a member of the ALP, Max joined the Country Party. Max believed in free enterprise, individual responsibility and reward. When asked why he got into politics, Max said matter-of-factly, 'I didn't like socialism.' As a fifth generation Australian and former sergeant in the Army, Max wanted to make a difference—not just for his own generation but for the future of Queensland. In his maiden speech in 1957 he said—

I am proud to be associated with the new Government because I'm sure that their approach to the many problems will be as statesmen thinking of the next generations, not as politicians looking to the next elections.

Soon after entering parliament Max gained a reputation for being a hard worker. His efforts were rewarded in 1968 when he was made the minister for works and housing. However, as the Premier has mentioned, it was his role as police minister for which Max would be remembered. On looking at the parliamentary record I see that he was the first stand-alone police minister appointed in 1974 until 1976.

Long before he was made minister, Max held great hope for Queensland police. In 1968 he told a graduating class of police recruits that their respected position in the force was far more powerful than their charge book. He said, 'Your uniform is a symbol of authority. It commands respect.'

An example of Max's integrity and respect for police was evident in the way in which he ran his department. He did not seek to interfere with the operational side of policing. While he was very active in seeking reform, he was an inclusive leader who thought that the people best placed to improve the police force were the police themselves. To borrow some words from the member for Murrumba, he was a democratic politician in that he separated his role from that of the commissioner's role.

One of Max's first actions as police minister was to appoint Ray Whitrod to the position of Police Commissioner. Several years earlier, when Max had effective control over the Police portfolio, Max had commissioned a review into the administration, education and training of Queensland police. One of the key recommendations from the McKinna report was to make Ray Whitrod the independent Police Commissioner.

Max Hodges was instrumental in boosting specialist training for police. He personally instigated the establishment of Australia's most modern and advanced police training academy at Oxley. He founded the force's first planning and research unit to tackle emerging challenges in policing and was responsible for establishing an anti-hijacking squad, a police dog unit, neighbourhood police programs and for purchasing Queensland's first police aircraft.

As minister, Max Hodges was committed to boosting police resources to improve the service. On one occasion when he received the department's budget submission he sent it back with the instruction, 'Ask for 10 times more than you want and put in a few reasons as to the urgency of it.' As a result, the Police budget almost doubled during his time as minister.

Max Hodges was police minister for less than two years—between December 1974 and July 1976. Yet his fearless actions and determination in this time earned him respect from all sides of politics, even if it was not immediately forthcoming. The late Kevin Hooper, the ALP member for Archerfield, summed it up when he said—

I regard Max Hodges as the best Minister for Police this Tory Government has had in 19 years of office.

I think it is fair to say that Max Hodges was one of the best police ministers Queensland has ever seen.

In 1976 Max Hodges lost the Police portfolio and took on the role of tourism and marine services minister, during which time he was responsible for getting the Brisbane ports corporation up and running as well as for the first campaign of promoting Queensland to the world. However, his brief spell in the Police portfolio left an indelible mark. As Ray Whitrod put it—

So much of the reform highlights in Queensland were brought about by the actions of the Police Minister, Max Hodges.

Max Hodges worked tirelessly for his state so that his family and families like his could have a better future in Queensland. He took an active interest in every aspect of government. Today, this parliament shows him the respect that he so rightly deserves in title and in character. The Hon. Allen Maxwell Hodges passed away peacefully on 31 July, aged 92. He is survived by his son, Russell, and daughter-in-law, Glenys; son-in-law, Peter; and his seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.