



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE: WOOD, MR P OAM

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.39 am): I rise to speak on the passing of Peter Wood, a member of this House from 1966 to 1974 when he represented the constituents of Toowoomba East and Toowoomba South. Peter Wood came from a strong Labor family. As the Premier has said, his father, Leslie Wood, held the seat of Toowoomba North from 1953 until 1958. It was a tumultuous time after the Labor split in 1957. Leslie Wood was elected opposition leader in that year but died of a heart attack in 1958. For Peter Wood the loss of his father was devastating. But politics was in his blood and he sought preselection and stood for the seat of Toowoomba East in 1960 and again in 1963, losing narrowly both times—indeed, by just 11 votes in 1963.

After the narrow loss, Peter Wood headed to London, where he worked as a teacher and also for the British Labour Party on its 1964 campaign. In London he met his wife to be, Sydney girl Robin Hadorn. They returned to Australia and married in Sydney in 1965 before they settled in Toowoomba. The next year, 1966, Peter Wood won the seat of Toowoomba East which later became Toowoomba South. He loved the challenge, and his teaching background gave him the grounding to serve as Labor's shadow minister for education from 1968 to 1974.

His twin brother, Bill, won the seat of Cook in 1969. They made history as the first twin brothers elected to any Australian parliament. Peter and Bill Wood lost their seats in 1974, but Bill Wood subsequently served in the ACT legislature. I had the pleasure of meeting him at a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference in 2004 in Perth when he was in his final term.

Peter never lost his interest in politics and turned his energies to local government and became a councillor for Toowoomba City Council. It is here that he undertook arguably his greatest and certainly most recognised community service, not just through the council but also through many community and cultural groups. Peter Wood was first elected to Toowoomba City Council in 1982. He was deputy mayor from 1991 until 2004 and served on a host of planning and community service committees.

Peter Wood was always a strong advocate for Toowoomba and the region. In his maiden speech to parliament he spoke of decentralisation and the benefits of businesses moving to Toowoomba and other regional centres. Interestingly, he spoke of the great benefit of the state owned railways in serving his communities and regional Queensland. To use his words, the railways played a vital role in helping decentralise Queensland.

In that speech, made 44 years ago, Mr Wood said that the task of government should be to minimise centralisation and aim to build moderately sized cities instead of one large one. Even back then, Peter Wood warned of the problems of Brisbane's unfettered growth and the financial burden it was placing on council and the state government. He also spoke of the need for Toowoomba to develop secure water supplies.

Peter Wood believed there was more to a city's development than simply managing growth. He also placed great importance on cultural development. As the Premier has mentioned, he was a strong patron of the arts. He chaired the Regional Art Galleries Association of Queensland after helping establish the

Toowoomba Regional Gallery in 1994. He helped establish the Lionel Lindsay Gallery and Library Society in 1991 and also encouraged talented young artists through his own Peter Wood Acquisitive Award.

Peter Wood was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 2007 after being awarded a Centenary Medal in 2001. The LNP passes on its condolences to his wife, Robin, and Stephanie and family and friends of Peter Wood.