



Speech by

## John-Paul Langbroek

**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

Hansard Thursday, 11 February 2010

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### SIR LEO HIELSCHER

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.54 am): Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this motion. I note the comments of the Premier and the Treasurer. I also want to acknowledge the contributions of Sir Leo Hielscher. He is one of the great public servants of Queensland, ranking with luminaries such as Sir David Longland and Sir JD Storey. He epitomises the public servants' credo that many of us hear about—and that is frank and fearless advice. There is no doubt that politicians at times focus on the short term and someone like Sir Leo has clearly, by the example of his service having served for more than five decades, shown that he is focused on the long term.

He has served successive governments on both sides with great professionalism, and his apprentices have provided the senior ranks of the Queensland Treasury department for years. It is a credit to him, when I look at his record that was just provided to me as I came into this House, that he served as an entrepreneurial and future focused Under Treasurer from 1974 to 1988. Apart from a short period in the mid-1990s, we have had a very long Labor administration since 1989 which is a contrast to the first administration that he served in from 1974 to 1988. It is a credit to Sir Leo that he has not been politicised and there has never been any question about whether he has been politicised but that he really has provided frank and fearless advice to governments of both sides.

He has had the capacity to identify and raid hollow logs for many years in order to satisfy the immediate financial concerns of the government. He was extremely innovative in working with the former member for Lilley, Kevin Cairns, in ensuring that Queensland was able to receive additional payments from the Commonwealth to raise Queensland's service standards through the Commonwealth Grants Commission. In his role as Chairman of the Queensland Treasury Corporation, he has raised Queensland's profile across the world. His word is his bond in international financial circles. I read with interest the details of the Premier's and Treasurer's fundraising trips overseas where Sir Leo Hielscher has been an important, integral part.

Of course as a loyal public servant he has never divulged when his political masters have failed to heed his advice. I think it is important to note that it always has been advice. I do not think Sir Leo would claim credit for the policies that have made this state the great state that it is. He would give the credit to his political masters of both sides. I think that it is important to acknowledge that, while he has provided the advice, it is the politicians, the people who have led this state, who have then put those policies—some of which have been accepted but obviously not all—into action that has led to the state that we now have. It has clearly been transformed from an immature rural economy and Sir Leo has been acknowledged as the architect of the modern Queensland economy.

I note his list of career highlights that were mentioned by the Premier which include influencing the growth of Queensland's coal and aluminium industries and developing the royalties structure that the Treasurer referred to; helping to develop the Queensland sugar industry and its infrastructure; researching and developing the financial and operational structure for the introduction of casinos; facilitating the funding for the original Gateway Bridge—and we congratulate him on the tribute that has been accorded

him by the Premier in naming the Gateway bridges after Sir Leo—developing the state's acclaimed fully funded public superannuation approach; and founding the Queensland Treasury Corporation.

The LNP wishes Sir Leo the very best in his new endeavours as Foundation Chairman in an advisory role with the QTC. I think it is also interesting to note that, whilst the Treasurer and the Premier spoke of his age, it just shows the ageism that seems to abound in modern Australian society that our cricketers and footballers should retire at 30, but that is clearly something that need not apply in politics. The wisdom that comes with age is epitomised by Sir Leo and other public servants like him. I am happy to speak to this motion and pass on the congratulations of the LNP, the opposition in this state. We wish him the best and we thank him for his dedication as a true public servant.