




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Record of Proceedings, 25 November 2014

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Goss, Mr WK

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.15 am): Madam Speaker, just as so many were, I was shocked to hear the news of the passing of Wayne Goss. So, too, were my mother and father. Wayne achieved some terrific reforms during his time as Premier. He was a true friend to the Pitt family. My father, Warren Pitt, had the honour of serving with Wayne Goss in his cabinet as minister for business, industry and regional development and later in the Beattie and Bligh cabinets also. Dad was proud to serve as a minister in his government because he believed Wayne Goss was a man of integrity, a man of compassion and a man of fairness. He said that Wayne was a hard taskmaster, but he never asked anyone to do anything that he would not do himself. During dad's long battle with cancer Wayne Goss was a frequent visitor who was ever ready to boast of the virtues of the Brisbane Broncos as they beat dad's team St George. Dad was proud to attend the memorial service that was held last week for Wayne.

Members of this House would know that in politics not everyone will always agree with you, but Wayne Goss listened, he consulted and he won the respect of those around him and of Queenslanders in general. Wayne Goss was a true Queensland great, and he has earned his place as a Labor icon. He did so much to modernise the state of Queensland, bringing Labor back into office after 32 years of conservative rule. He put an end to a period in which Queensland was often the butt of cruel jokes. He put an end to decades of corruption and a belief by other Australians that the state was firmly stuck in the past.

Under his leadership Wayne Goss saw a renaissance in the arts, in governance and in education and social equality. Wayne Goss delivered Queensland from the gerrymander when not all votes were equal. In my electorate of Mulgrave his legacy still has impacts today and many constituents, even those who are welded-on conservatives, freely admit that Wayne Goss did leave Queensland a better place for his time in office. Wayne Goss emerged to take our state to the forefront of reform, and he set a new standard in ethical behaviour. He was, as his election ad said, 'A new force for the good of Queensland.'

Wayne Goss rose to the top of his profession but never once forgot his roots and the people who helped him achieve so much. From his working class background in Inala he forged a strong career in the law before reaching the highest office in Queensland as Premier in 1989. He wasted no time in changing Queensland forever: the imperial honours system became a relic of the past; he restored fairness to our electoral system by ending the gerrymander; he implemented the recommendations of the Fitzgerald inquiry; he abolished the infamous Special Branch; he decriminalised homosexuality; and he later lifted the ban on free association to allow street marches. Wayne Goss tightened gun laws during comprehensive licensing well before the Port Arthur massacre prompted others into action.

When it comes to the environment, he stopped logging in our state forests and safeguarded our natural environment, including creating many national parks. Protections for heritage buildings were increased. In Far North Queensland Wayne Goss established the Wet Tropics Management Authority and his government introduced a state version of Aboriginal land rights. Every region in Queensland shared in his concept of decentralisation as he oversaw a massive public works program: schools, hospitals, police stations and courthouses. He introduced freedom of information laws, the precursor to our right to information laws, as well as laws about employment equality, antidiscrimination provisions and judicial review for administrative decisions.

From an economic standpoint, as Premier, Wayne Goss—in partnership with the then member for Cairns and Treasurer Keith De Lacy—oversaw six budgets that provided major increases in areas like health and education and addressed historic inequalities in pay for police, teachers and nurses. Having a Premier like Wayne Goss and a Treasurer from Far North Queensland meant that my part of the state enjoyed unprecedented attention, and the capital works program was a reflection of this. He reformed the Public Service to ensure that appointments were based on merit, not cronyism.

From a personal standpoint I have a couple of vivid memories of Wayne Goss. When I was 12 years old I attended my first ever State of Origin game at Lang Park, which was a big deal for a kid from Gordonvale in Far North Queensland. At this particular game my dad and I sat next to Wayne Goss in the stands. We were later to feature on an ALP campaign TV ad.

What happened was Queensland had scored and, clearly, obviously the post-try celebration made for great pictures, with fist-pumping and crowd cheering. It was a magic moment, but I am not sure what was more exciting at the time: the Maroons scoring a big try or sitting next to the future Premier of the state. I think I was going for the Maroons at that time.

A friend of mine reminded me of another time, when Wayne Goss visited our primary school. At that time, in around 1988, I understand that he was not actually allowed to visit our school, such was the regime at the time. Wayne smiled as he showed us a clearly aged book that was still in the library. It said, 'One day, man will walk on the moon.' Two years later there were computers and new books. That says everything about Queensland before and after Wayne Goss.

On another personal note, I got to spend some time with Wayne prior to the 1995 state election, at that time doing some work on the then proposed Cape York wilderness zone policy. I recall that David Barbagallo, the now CEO of Endeavour Foundation, was an ALP organiser at the time and he was providing us great company on the road. But when night came there was time to sit and enjoy some quiet conversation. It was during this time that Wayne Goss gave me some great life advice. He said, 'You never want to be pigeonholed into one career. In your life you will have many careers.' In his case he was right, being in the law, politics and later achieving in the business world after attaining his MBA. In my life thus far it has meant working in radio, in the cinema and film industry and in the Public Service before entering parliament. I do plan on having other careers besides political life but, hopefully, much to the disappointment of those opposite I am sure, those other careers will be many years down the track.

This time next week will be 2 December, marking the 25th anniversary of Labor being returned to government in Queensland. This is a feat that would not have been possible if it were not for Wayne Goss and his drive. He was a man defined by the values that he lived by and he inspired those values in others. Wayne was certainly a breath of fresh air and certainly a man of energy and integrity. He took Queensland from a parochial backwater to a powerhouse. Wayne Goss has inspired a generation of politicians, me included, to strive for the highest standards of accountability in government, to aspire to achieve reform and the ideal of public service as its own reward.

But for all of his achievements in life and in politics, above all Wayne Goss was a devoted family man. In return, his family was devoted to him. His wife, Roisin, captivated the hearts of all who met her as she travelled around the state supporting her husband and his work, for which she shared an equal dedication.

After a long battle with ill health, Wayne Goss passed away on 10 November 2014 at the age of 63. I know that I speak on behalf of my entire family when I say that our thoughts are with Wayne's mother, with Roisin and with their children, Ryan and Caitlin. We cannot fully grasp the magnitude of their loss but in some small way we understand, and our thoughts are with them at this very sad time.