



Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 13 September 2016

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Aiken, Mr JA



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.32 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late John Albert Aiken, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

John Albert Aiken, better known to those who knew him as Jack, was born in Kensington, New South Wales on 17 March 1918. Mr Aiken was educated in New South Wales at the Hornsby Public and Chatswood Intermediate high schools and later graduated with honours in wool technology at the East Sydney Technical College.

It is reported that during the Great Depression Mr Aiken packed up his swag and moved from Sydney to Charleville looking for work. He worked as a wool classer, a postmaster and storekeeper, a newsagent in Charleville, and a grazier and bloodstock breeder. I also note that, upon finding work in Charleville, Mr Aiken put enough money aside to pay for his five younger siblings to go to school.

In 1969, the then longstanding ALP member for the state seat of Warrego decided to retire from the parliament, and Mr Aiken was selected by the ALP to contest the seat as its candidate at the upcoming state election. On 17 May 1969, Mr Aiken was successful in his election and took his place in this House as the newly elected member for Warrego.

Mr Aiken was a strong advocate for the future and wellbeing of the people of the west, as anybody who reads his first speech in this House in 1969 would attest. He spoke passionately about issues such as drought relief and the changing nature of the times in Western Queensland and how some of those matters could be addressed. I also understand he was labelled the 'Voice of the West' in a *Courier-Mail* front page of the time because he never needed a microphone.

After the 1974 state election when he lost his seat, Mr Aitken stayed in politics, becoming mayor of the Murweh Shire Council from 1975 to 1978. The former member for Gregory, Vaughan Johnson, said—

Neil Turner won the seat of Warrego from a very popular Jack Aiken. All that happened when Neil Turner took over was a changing of the guard—two similar blokes, two bush larrikin type fellows, two men whose word was their bond.

Following Mr Aiken's passing, his daughter Judey described her father as being a 'Labor man through and through' who 'was bred with and died with Labor'.

John Albert Aiken passed away on 3 September 2016 aged 98 years. A funeral service to commemorate his life was held at St Mary's Catholic Church, Charleville on 6 September 2016. I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service Mr Aiken gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend my sympathy and that of this House to Mr Aiken's wife, Jill, and his children Judey, Mary and Jeffrey.