




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2016

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Hewitt, Mr WD

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.39 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this state by the late William Douglas Hewitt, a former member of the parliament of Queensland and minister of the state.
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.

William Douglas Hewitt was born in Mooloolaba on 31 October 1930. I am indebted to the online Queensland Speaks series that boasts a wideranging interview with Mr Hewitt. I commend it to honourable members.

From his own unhappy childhood—his father had been a veteran of the First World War—Bill left school after completing scholarship. He joined Carricks Furniture Factory as a floor boy before securing work at Castlemaine Perkins, where he worked at day so he could undertake night school. He later became an office manager and then a business manager.

With a strong interest in politics, Mr Hewitt first joined the Liberal Party in 1950 and was to become president and then a life member of the Queensland Young Liberals. In 1960 he unsuccessfully contested the seat of Belmont, despite knocking on more than 4,000 doors. The following year, for the 1961 federal election, Mr Hewitt served as campaign director for James Killen to hold Moreton. Mr Killen won the seat by the narrowest of margins. Whether Menzies sent the ‘Killen, you are magnificent’ telegram or not, the victory of the Moreton campaign returned the coalition government, and it held office for another 11 years.

Mr Hewitt was selected by the Liberal Party to contest the seat of Chatsworth in the 1966 election. He represented the seat of Chatsworth until 1977 before moving to represent the seat of Greenslopes from 1977 to 1983 following an electoral redistribution.

During his time in the parliament Mr Hewitt served in many parliamentary, party and executive government roles. Even as a new member, Mr Hewitt was determined to see the institution of parliament doing well. From his first speech he criticised the questioning and scrutiny in the parliament when he said—

As to our form of questioning, Mr Speaker—I say this with respect—I content myself simply with this comment: that questions without notice are the champagne of politics; in Queensland we content ourselves with flat lemonade.

He was a temporary chairman of committees, or temporary Speaker as we call the position today, from 1972 to 1975. He served as Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees from February 1975 to October 1980. It was in that capacity that Mr Hewitt took the principled decision to not support then premier Bjelke-Petersen’s nomination of Albert Patrick Field to fill the Senate vacancy resulting from the death of Labor senator Bertie Milliner.

In December 1980 Mr Hewitt was elevated to cabinet as minister for environment, survey and valuation and administrative services in the Bjelke-Petersen government. He served in that ministry until August 1983, when he was appointed minister for welfare services. However, along with his Liberal Party colleague Colin Miller, whose passing the House marked in a condolence motion earlier this week, Mr Hewitt was one of the Liberal Party ministers in the then coalition government who resigned from the cabinet on 18 August 1983. Mr Hewitt contested the state election that was held shortly thereafter but was defeated in the seat of Greenslopes by Leisha Harvey of the National Party.

While he was a member of this House Mr Hewitt was a keen advocate for the importance of the institution of parliament and he led many calls for parliamentary reforms, in particular an improved parliamentary committee system. Mr Hewitt retained these interests long after he left parliament.

William Douglas Hewitt passed away on 23 November 2016 aged 86 years, and a funeral service to commemorate his life was held yesterday at the Mt Thompson crematorium at Holland Park. I place on record the government's thanks for the dedicated years of service Mr Hewitt gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the Queensland community and on behalf of the Queensland government. I take this opportunity to extend my deepest sympathies and those of this House to Mr Hewitt's family and friends. I also pay tribute to his family who are here in the House today. All members of the House pass on our condolences and acknowledge his contribution to public life.