




Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 13 September 2016

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Mr JA Aiken

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 am): I rise to add to the acknowledgement for the service, as already mentioned by the Premier, of the late Jack Aiken, the former member for Warrego. As the Premier has indicated, Mr Aiken was born in Kensington in Sydney into a life of humble beginnings, as many of his generation were. As the years passed, he made his way north to Charleville in Western Queensland, where he was homeless and looking for work. It is fair to say that his path to parliament was not easy, and for a time he lived under what is still the old bridge over the Warrego River. However, his energy and determination saw him become an active member of the community, working in the local newsagency and, again, as the Premier has mentioned, paying for his five younger siblings to attend school—no mean feat.

In 1969 he was elected as the state member for Warrego. As a community leader, Jack fought for Queensland's farming families. During his maiden speech in parliament, he passionately called for greater assistance for those in the west—something that we continue to hear about today. As the Premier has also acknowledged, the *Courier-Mail* nicknamed him the 'Voice of the West' because he never needed a microphone. I think it is fair to say that there are many voices from the west who have been in this place who have not needed a microphone and long may that be the case.

Jack admired the hard work and tenacity of our farmers and campaigned in a different time for a wheat subsidy for graziers. He called on the government to provide natural gas for cheaper power and television. He also pushed for the subsidised installation of refrigeration and air-conditioning plants to make life, as he said, 'more comfortable and pleasant' for Queenslanders. He was a great supporter of the ambulance and the Royal Flying Doctor Service and worked tirelessly to ensure they received the support they needed.

Mr Aiken served as the member for Warrego until December 1974 and remains the last state member for Warrego—once a safe seat for the ALP. However, that was not the end of his political career. He continued to serve his community as mayor of the Murweh shire from 1975 to 1978. Mr Aiken was outspoken. He fought his way up despite great adversity early in life and he never backed down from the issues he felt passionately about. On behalf of the opposition, I support the motion moved by the Premier and extend our condolences to the family of the late Jack Aiken.