




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 15 February 2018

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Harper, Mr RM

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.44 am): Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the family of the honourable Robert Malcolm Harper, known as Bob Harper, who are here in the gallery today including his wife, Rhonda Harper; his daughters, Jacinta, Hayley and Deanne; his sister-in-law Val; and his grandson Hugh.

Bob Harper was a political warhorse. No-one should underestimate his contribution to politics in Queensland and most particularly to conservative politics. I had the pleasure of knowing Bob's older brother, Neville, quite well as he served, as has just been noted, in this House as the member for Auburn, my local area, from 1980 to 1992.

Bob had a varied career both as a representative in this House and as a staffer running campaigns across Australia. Bob first became involved in politics at the age of 21, joining his local Liberal Party branch. Before long he was campaigning for the Nudgee candidate in the 1966 election. In 1969 Bob himself became the Liberal candidate for Nudgee, a seat that at the time was an ultra-safe Labor seat. In 1972 Bob married his loving wife, Rhonda, and together they moved across town to Jindalee. He quickly became further involved in politics in the western suburbs, working on campaigns and filling positions in the centenary branch for many years.

From 1995 to 1998 Bob served as the member for Mount Ommaney. He was parliamentary secretary to the deputy premier and treasurer from 1997 to 1998 and chairman of the public accounts committee in 1996. His career in politics did not end there. He soon became state secretary of the Liberal Party and was appointed the acting state director in 1999.

Bob's commitment to the cause extended to work as a campaign director in the state and federal elections in the seats of Ipswich, Bundamba, Mount Ommaney, Redlands, Oxley and Bowman. He also worked tirelessly on the Jamboree and Toowong ward campaigns. Most particularly, Bob worked on the campaign of my colleague Jon Krause, the member for Scenic Rim, and also Matt McEachan, the former member for Redlands, who I would like to acknowledge is also in the gallery today.

It has been said that Bob would drive his younger political proteges, insisting on going over issues, materials and strategies with them again and again until it was airtight. He would write everything down and arrive at a campaign office with an enormous bundle of notes, spreadsheets, loose-leaf writings and budgets all wrapped up tightly in rubber bands. Everything was there at his fingertips, ready to fight the good fight for his beloved political cause.

Sadly, too ill to work as he would have wished, Bob passed away midway through the 2017 state election. Even at the end he continued to assist campaigns of members in this House today. His loss is felt deeply by everyone in the Liberal National Party. I have no doubt that it is felt so very deeply by his family who are here today. I am sure you are proud, as we are, of the massive contribution Bob made to politics in Australia. He will be missed. On behalf of the members of the opposition, we pass on our sincere condolences to Bob's family and friends.