




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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ADJOURNMENT

Hilton, Mr P

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.03 pm): Late last year I had the great pleasure of representing the Premier in Stanthorpe to celebrate the Labor Party's long historical connection to the Granite Belt and to celebrate the Hon. Paul Hilton, the state member for Carnarvon, who represented Carnarvon from 1935 to 1963. Not many of you may know of Paul Hilton, but it is well worth reflecting on his contribution to Queensland. As a Labor member of parliament Paul Hilton focused on the needs of people who lived in the regions, fighting for both farmers and workers alike. Paul Hilton's maiden speech in 1935 showed him to be a political visionary who looked towards the future needs of his electorate and the whole of Queensland. He highlighted the need for urgent investment in road infrastructure in Queensland's western regions and the outback, and he encouraged the state government to invest in medical research to help find a cure for influenza, which was a devastating illness at the time.

Paul Hilton also used his maiden speech to implore local government authorities to apply for state government loans and subsidies to help carry out local works which would help provide jobs to unemployed people in country areas hit hard by the Great Depression. He talked about advancing the spirit of cooperation between primary producers and wage earners in country areas and fully believed that Labor policy serves both the man on the land as well as the wage earner.

Later in his career as secretary for public works and housing Paul Hilton secured pre-fabricated housing from overseas to overcome the housing shortage that gripped Queensland after the war. He also secured pre-fabricated classrooms for Queensland schools. He truly was a visionary. These actions were enormously beneficial to a growing state coping with a baby boom after World War II. Paul Hilton also supported the Queensland Labor government's free public hospital system, making Queensland the first Australian state to provide free public hospital treatment to anyone.

In Stanthorpe I was delighted to listen to Paul Hilton's son, Paul Hilton Jr, who is in his nineties. He spoke very eruditely and warmly of his mother, Esther, who worked tirelessly to support her husband in his campaigns and servicing the electorate. An outback electorate in 1930s Queensland would have been a daunting place with dirt roads, limited transport and long distances making contact with constituents very difficult. But this did not deter Esther, who travelled the dirt roads by foot, getting to know every constituent and helping them out with electoral matters as well as ensuring the sick and infirm were issued postal votes at election time.

Paul Hilton rightfully deserves an esteemed place in Queensland's history, and he reminds us that it is in Labor's DNA to work for all Queenslanders whether they live in the inner city, the outer suburbs, in regional and rural areas or the outback. Once again, it was a great honour to participate in celebrating Paul Hilton's legacy in Stanthorpe. I wish to thank Helen Gibson from the Stanthorpe-Wallangarra ALP Branch for helping to organise the event and Paul Hilton's family, who also attended: his son Paul Jr; his daughter Margaret; and grandchildren Jane Webster, Mary Hilton, Nick Hilton, and Genevieve Gibson.