




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Fouras, Hon. D, AM

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.37 am): Today, the House acknowledges the life and service of one of its most distinguished servants, Demetrios 'Jim' Fouras. Since 1859, this House has seen 37 individuals serve as Speaker—two have served on two occasions. They have all done so with varying degrees of success but many have walked a fine line between their responsibilities to this House and, where applicable, their responsibilities to their party. The measure of their success is how, even after the passing of the years, they are remembered. Some were never able to shake off the constraints of political partisanship, while others were more willing and able to embrace the challenging role of being a bipartisan Speaker in an environment that is driven by political partisanship. Jim Fouras can be placed in the second category. He forged for himself a reputation as a defender of the House and its members and as one who sought to uphold the supremacy of the parliament itself.

Jim served as Speaker of this House for just over six years and then served for an additional 6½ years as deputy speaker. Few could have imagined at the time of his birth in a small village in rural Greece in 1938 that he would rise to the position of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland. His story speaks to his tenacity, perseverance and will to succeed. Jim was at the forefront of the postwar migration wave from Europe that brought so many people to Australia. Writing in the *Daily Telegraph* in 2015 he described his arrival in postwar Australia—

When the war was over, Greece experienced a protracted civil war. My father volunteered to fight against the communists who later took over our village. By 1949, the civil war was still raging. Against my mother's wishes, my older brother and I were sent to Australia to be cared for by my father's uncle, who owned Theodore's Cafe in Southport. I was only 10.

He attended TSS and graduated from the University of Queensland in science and economics before working in the DPI. Jim joined the ALP in 1966, which was a time of developing social and political change in Australia. Against this background he made his foray into politics in 1977, winning back the traditional Labor seat of South Brisbane from the Liberal Party.

It is interesting to note that from his election in that year he served in four shadow ministerial roles, including shadow Treasurer, over the next nine years. During this time he aligned himself with the reform group within the ALP, seeking to bring about internal change to improve the party's electoral prospects. It was in 1986 that he faced a setback, losing preselection to his colleague Anne Warner, whose seat of Kurilpa had been abolished in the 1985 redistribution. Out of the House, Jim furthered his interests in the welfare of migrants by working on various projects through the Anglican Church and on homelessness through the Human Rights Commission's Burdekin report. In 1989 Jim was elected to the seat of Ashgrove, joining 27 other ALP members elected for the first time in supporting the incoming Goss government. His return to the House saw him elevated to the position of Speaker, a role he held until Labor lost office in 1996. As John Wanna wrote in the *Australian Journal of Politics and History* in his review of 1995—

The powerbrokers in the party neglected to discuss the change with Jim, who was not about to vacate the position. He dug in and continued in that role with great service.

The appointment was short lived, as the Goss government was defeated in 1996, but Jim continued to serve as the member for Ashgrove for a further 10 years, during which time he served as deputy speaker. Throughout his time in parliament Jim was a champion of the parliament and its members. He believed in what parliament could achieve. Jim was proud of his Greek heritage and held a deep commitment to family. He was a proud supporter of Australia's migrant community and a believer in the importance of social justice. He served his community, his party and the parliament with great distinction. Today the opposition joins the Premier in offering our deepest condolences to his partner, Tanya Ferrington, and his family and thanks them for allowing the people of Queensland to share some time with Jim.