




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Record of Proceedings, 12 May 2022

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

De Lacy, Hon. KE, AM

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.41 am): Our state has lost one of the genuine champions of the Queensland parliament with the passing of Keith De Lacy. As the member for Cairns from 1983 until his retirement in 1998, he worked tirelessly for his community and the people of the Far North. As treasurer from 1989 until 1996 he exercised firm control over the state's finances and recognised the need for government to promote investment to help generate economic growth.

Keith De Lacy's contributions as minister and parliamentarian were grounded in his diverse background and experience. There are very few members of this place who could lay claim to a background which includes work as a tobacco farmer, miner, agriculture officer, agricultural college principal in PNG, and newsagent. With this background it is little wonder that Keith De Lacy was able to transfer his myriad of skills to the political arena.

Keith De Lacy's journey to this place was one of tenacity. He suffered two extremely narrow defeats in Barron River before his success in Cairns upon the retirement of the long-serving member Ray Jones in 1983. In his autobiography titled *A Philosophical Journey*, published shortly before his death, Mr De Lacy wrote of the challenges of campaigning. He said—

I never felt comfortable doorknocking. I felt like a fraud, like a religious evangelist who didn't believe in God. However, I did come away with a renewed respect for Jehovah's Witnesses and their doorknocking commitment to their cause. But of course, they had the reward of eternal life, while I, at best, a temporary seat in the rather less ethereal Parliament of Queensland.

Keith De Lacy entered the parliament at a time when Labor was in the doldrums; however, upon the election of the Goss government in 1989 Keith De Lacy rose to prominence as treasurer and established a reputation as an effective manager of the state's finances. Indeed, two of the most respected figures in the business and financial spheres in Queensland, Sir Leo Hielscher and Jim Kennedy, rated Keith De Lacy as an exceptional treasurer. The key to his success was outlined in his autobiography when he wrote—

I believe that you deliver on your social policy commitments through efficient spending and efficient delivery of programs ... well ordered priorities, a strong economy (which increases revenue) and a strong balance sheet, as opposed to splurging today and paying tomorrow, increasing taxes (which weakens the economy) and seeking to please the undeserving entitlement-seekers lining up outside the door.

After the Goss government lost in 1996, Keith De Lacy decided not to seek re-election and to pursue a new career in business. In his post-political life Mr De Lacy played a leading role in the business community. Indeed, he demonstrated that former politicians could make a valuable contribution to the life of the state once they leave this place. His political achievements were many, but his contribution after politics was significantly equal in its magnitude. He became chairman of Macarthur Coal, Ergon Queensland, Queensland Sugar, the Cubbie Group, Trinity Property Group, CEC Group, Hynes Lawyers, Nimrod Resources, China Oil and Foodstuffs Corporation, and Integrated Food and

Energy Development. He continued to serve the people of Cairns through his chairmanship of the Reef Casino Trust and as founding chairman of Advance Cairns. He was president of the AICD and became a Member of the Order of Australia in 2006. Mr De Lacy supported Queensland's then attorney-general, the present Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in his efforts to reform Queensland's directors' liability laws and restore the presumption of innocence.

How a member of this House is regarded is best judged not by what his or her allies say but what their opponents say about them. Those who would normally have been numbered against Mr De Lacy held him in the highest of regard, a clear testimony to his ability to cut across the political divide. Former premier Rob Borbidge said—

He was a giant of the Goss era Labor Party. He made a substantial contribution to public affairs in this state. I remember him as a passionate, deep thinker and he never hid his views, a rarity in politics.

His FNQ parliamentary colleague Warren Entsch, the member for Leichhardt, said—

We weren't on the same side of politics, but I always found Keith to be honest, affable, sincere and a man of the utmost integrity.

Keith De Lacy has left a legacy of which his family, who are here today, can be justifiably proud. From humble beginnings, he has left a significant mark on the Queensland political, economic and social landscape. On behalf of the opposition, I acknowledge Mr De Lacy's contribution to Queensland. We extend our deepest condolences to his family.