




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Record of Proceedings, 25 May 2023

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Phillips, Dr AF

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.38 am): The opposition wishes to be associated with this motion moved this morning by the Premier. I am honoured to offer our support as we recognise the contribution of Anita Phillips, the former member for Thuringowa. I first met Anita when I was a journalist in the Townsville region and she was on the verge of launching her political career. What impressed me was her commitment to her community. There is no doubt that her desire to contribute to the region, backed up by some sincerely held beliefs, was the principal factor that propelled her into the career of politics.

Anita Phillips was born in Melbourne in the final days of the Second World War and raised in a housing commission estate in the city's outer suburbs. It was this environment that inspired her in later life. In her first speech in this place she said—

My parents inspired me to believe that I could experience a better world. My mother assured me that anything was possible, even for girls. My father showed me that it was possible to struggle out of the stranglehold of poverty and class. During my school education I encountered other people who provided inspiration, in particular one or two Catholic nuns—women who encouraged me to believe that there are no barriers to achieving our dreams.

Upon moving to Townsville in 1969, she drew on her qualifications and accepted a position as the second social worker at the Townsville General Hospital with the encouragement of Joan Innes-Reid, Townsville's sole social worker, who later became the city's deputy mayor. It is to her credit that throughout her many careers Anita Phillips embodied the notion of continuous learning. Her social work degree was followed by a Diploma of Social Studies, an arts degree, a Master of Public Administration, a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Studies and a doctorate.

She was drawn to politics and after a whirlwind campaign won the seat of Thuringowa in 2001. In her term in this House she sought to fulfil three objectives: to give power to people in the community who had become marginalised; to support ecologically sustainable economic development; and to encourage the development of better leisure, art and sporting pursuits—as she said, 'putting more fun and enjoyment into the quality of people's lives'. Upon her election she thanked those beyond her family and the campaign team who had supported her, including former Victorian premier Joan Kirner, Emily's List and various trade unions. Such an undertaking, embraced without any guarantee of success at a time of political volatility in Queensland, points to an undoubted willingness to fight for the causes in which she believed.

Anita Phillips gave up her seat in this House in 2004 in what was an unsuccessful bid to win the federal seat of Herbert. As an indication of how well she understood the mood of a garrison city, when then Labor leader Mark Latham promised to return troops from Iraq by Christmas Anita famously said, 'I don't know if Latham said which Christmas.' What might have acted as a roadblock to many appears

to have spurred her on to new endeavours after this election loss. Her doctorate, undertaken through the University of Canberra and completed in 2022, examined the NDIS. As the Premier said, Minister Shorten described it as 'a remarkable scholarship'.

At various times she served as the ACT Public Advocate, a ministerial adviser, in various roles in local government, an academic at the Australian Catholic University, in professional associations and as a member of the Sunshine Coast Health and Hospital Board. Though a member of this House for a short time, Anita Phillips made a meaningful contribution in whatever field she choose.

During her term in this House Anita paid tribute to the support she received from her family. We are particularly pleased that so many of her family are here today, particularly two of her daughters, Rebecca and Keinton. You have much to be proud of. We offer our condolences on the passing of Anita Phillips.