



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2023

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**Barton, Hon. TA**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.40 am): I rise to pay tribute to the life and legacy of a Queensland titan of the Australian Labor Party, the Hon. Tom Barton. The first ever member for Waterford, Tom was many things to many people—an embodiment of the old Labor Party of times gone by yet forward looking in the scope and scale of his accomplishments.

Born in Ayr in 1949, he began work at 15 years of age. He completed his apprenticeship and worked as a fitter and turner in the sugar and alumina industries, eventually becoming involved with what is known today as the mighty Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union. He rose through the union movement with spirit and tenacity, never afraid to speak his mind and always prepared to fight for what he believed was right. First as a North Queensland organiser with the 'metalies' and then as their state research officer, he went on to become the assistant secretary and then general secretary of the Trades and Labor Council—what we know today as the Queensland Council of Unions.

Tom spearheaded the labour movement's fight against the Bjelke-Petersen attacks on unions and working people during the seventies and eighties. He was an integral part of securing superannuation for Queensland workers through both negotiations at the state level and working with the Hawke-Keating government in Canberra.

Eventually elected as the first ever member for Waterford in 1992, he went on to serve as minister for the environment and heritage, minister for police and corrective services, minister for state development, minister for employment, training and industrial relations and minister for sport—a formidable list made all the more formidable by what he managed to achieve in these positions, whether it was working with Noel Pearson on the 56th draft bill for the Cape York conservation zone to buy up land to hand back to First Nations communities or negotiating with then mayor Jim Soorley to secure the redevelopment of Suncorp Stadium.

Sometimes it was the carrot and sometimes it was the stick, but Tom always got the job done. That same determination meant that he was just as passionate about securing funding for organisations like the Loganlea Community Centre as he was about his annual pilgrimage with his son down to Bathurst to watch the Supercars. Even after public life was behind him, Tom never lost sight of the values and beliefs which had driven him his entire life, even working as the Edens Landing booth captain on the day that I was elected as the member for Waterford.

I want to acknowledge Tom's loving wife, Traute, an invaluable member of our local Logan community, and all of those who loved him and his family who are with us today. On behalf of the entire Waterford community, I want to pay tribute to Tom's lasting legacy and work. Farewell, Tom Barton. Rest in peace.