



Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**


**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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## **MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

### **Greenwood, Hon. JW, QC**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.35 am): Few members of this House have enjoyed such a successful career both before they were elected and after they left parliament than John Greenwood QC. A barrister, soldier, member of parliament and cabinet minister, John Greenwood made a significant contribution across a wide range of endeavours. His life is characterised by his commitment to three significant institutions—the law, parliament and politics—particularly as represented through the Liberal Party and the Australian Army.

Born in New South Wales in 1934, John Greenwood was educated in three states and graduated from the University of Queensland with degrees in both arts and law, at the same time as holding various positions in the student union movement, including president of the UQ student union. He was admitted as a barrister in 1958, became an active member of the Queensland Bar Association, was instrumental in the building of the new Inns of Court in North Quay, and served as honorary secretary of the association from 1959 to 1961. Throughout this period, he was a part-time lecturer in commercial law at the University of Queensland, served on the law faculty board and was a member of the University of Queensland senate from 1960 to 1966.

John Greenwood took silk in 1980, having practised across a range of matters, including constitutional cases before both the High Court and the Privy Council. However, it was after he left parliament that John Greenwood made what many would consider his most significant legal contribution: he appeared in the Wik case—known as the pastoral lease case—in 1996, seeking to ensure native title could coexist with pastoral leases. It was this advocacy, along with that of his colleagues, that was praised by former High Court Justice Michael Kirby.

If there is one thing that can be said about John Greenwood without dispute it is his commitment to liberalism that saw him elected as member for Ashgrove in the election of 1974. It is instructive to note that in his maiden speech during the address-in-reply debate in 1975, his central theme was the importance of strengthening Australia's federal system of government and the dangers faced from an increasingly centralist federal government. Measures to protect Australia's federal compact were significant driving forces throughout his time in this place. In 1976, John Greenwood entered the ministry as Minister for Survey, Valuation and Urban and Regional Affairs, a position he held in this or a modified form until 1980.

While he was defeated in 1983, his nine years in parliament were marked by three characteristics identified by his son, Nigel, at his funeral service at St John's Cathedral: he was famously incorruptible; he loved constitutional conventions, in particular Westminster parliamentary democracy under the Crown; and his commitment to frugality, including public frugality as a virtue in its own right.

John Greenwood will be remembered from his time in this House as a member who advocated for change but sought to base that change on the preservation of those institutions and practices that served the interests in our democracy. This position did not always serve his own personal interests, but he remained steadfast in this desire. His defeat in 1983 saw him return to the bar and continue his career as a barrister until his retirement in 2017.

The third strand in his life was his involvement with the Australian Army and the University of Queensland Regiment. He commenced national service training in 1952 and continued to serve until his retirement as a colonel in 1994. He transferred from the Infantry to the Army Legal Corps in 1973 and was later appointed a Defence Force magistrate.

He championed conservation causes before they became a feature of mainstream politics. As a lawyer he appeared before the royal commission into oil drilling on the Great Barrier Reef from 1970 to 1972. He was instrumental in preserving the reef from oil and gas drilling. As a member of parliament he helped convince the then government not to allow mining at the Mount Etna caves in Central Queensland, thus helping protect the endangered ghost bat.

He campaigned to preserve a range of buildings in our city, including the former St Martins War Memorial Hospital adjacent to St John's Cathedral, against opposition from the church and municipal governance at that time.

At her father's funeral, John Greenwood's daughter Kate observed that his life was driven by a sense of fairness and justice and that his lifelong themes were of building and protecting those things that he held dear. Throughout his life and despite the challenges, John Greenwood maintained his commitment to liberalism. Even in his later years he handed out how-to-vote cards at his local booth at Fig Tree Pocket. John Greenwood's family were everything to him. Despite the fullness of his own political and professional life, family was the foundation of all.

Today, we are pleased to welcome his wife, Barbara, back to the House, along with his children Nigel and Kate. They can be assured that John Greenwood will be remembered as someone who sought to bring his better instincts to Queensland's robust political environment. We recognise his contribution today and acknowledge that our parliament is so much better for him having served in this place.