



Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**


**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 May 2024

## MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

**Flynn, Dr JG**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.42 am): The opposition offers its support to the motion moved this morning, recognising the service to this House of Dr John Flynn, who served the people of Toowoomba North from 1989 until 1992. John Flynn won a seat for the Labor Party in 1989 which for the previous 15 years had been held by the Liberal or National parties. However, his victory followed in the footsteps of two significant Labor identities from Toowoomba—Jack Duggan and Les Wood, both of whom served as leader of the opposition after the split of 1957. The year 1989 remains a significant year in Queensland political history. That election saw 24 Labor members elected in seats that had been held previously by the Liberal or National parties, John Flynn being one of them.

Dr Flynn was born in Brisbane into a family of Irish Catholic immigrants and completed his secondary education at Marist College at Rosalie. After graduating from the University of Queensland with a first-class honours degree in biochemistry, John enrolled in medicine. After hospital service at both the Royal Brisbane and Royal Children's hospitals, he bought into a general practice in Toowoomba in 1982. Throughout this entire period John Flynn's strong links to Labor came to the fore. He ran on the radical action ticket for a position on the student council at UQ. He joined Young Labor and honed his campaign skills through the Paddington branch of the ALP. He was an active participant in the principle political campaigns of the 1970s, including those against the Vietnam War, conscription and the 1971 Springbok tour.

His contesting of Toowoomba North in 1989 was very much an extension of the practical politics he had pursued for nearly 20 years. Despite the 15 years that had passed since Labor last held the seat, the then member for Caboolture, Ken Hayward, convinced John Flynn that the seat was winnable, and he provided valuable advice on campaigning. John was successful by a margin of 374 votes, and so began his term as a member of this House in which he was the sole ALP representative in southern Queensland west of the Great Dividing Range. It is instructive to note that in his first speech to this place in March 1990 John Flynn highlighted issues which he regarded as critical to his constituents in Toowoomba North, including child abuse; sexual assault; the need for new educational facilities; and the need for efficient, cost-effective health services. He sought to promote the cause of regional development as well as narrowing the gulf between city and country.

Throughout his three years in this House John Flynn was keenly aware of the need to improve rural health services throughout the state. This concern covered access to screening services, improved facilities and, importantly, an increased ability to consult qualified GPs and hospital doctors. He believed in the importance of parliament and he chaired the Public Accounts Committee in his final year in this House. However, the swings and roundabouts of politics saw John Flynn defeated after only three years, albeit by a mere 199 votes, after a redistribution.

He returned to medicine, setting up a number of private practices in Brisbane's southern suburbs. He championed medical care for the aged, believing in the need to avoid hospitalisation for the elderly while not comprising continuity of care. He maintained an interest in professional medical organisations and continued his lifelong support for the Labor Party and its candidates. Throughout his time in this House John Flynn served his community with diligence, compassion and commitment. While his time in this place was brief, he made a mark as both a member of parliament and a dedicated medical professional.

I express my thanks to John's wife, Kelyn, who provided much of this information on John's life and achievements and shared some further stories with me this morning. In doing so, I cannot help but reflect on John's first speech when he recorded his gratitude for all that she had done for his campaign. He said—

After our victory was announced, she expressed concern at the effects it would have on our family. It was with great pleasure that I could say to her, 'Well, it's your fault. You were the campaign-director.'

We are honoured to have Kelyn and two of their children, Julia and Daniel, in the gallery. Tom is unable to be here today, but he is watching online. His former electorate officer Sharon joins us today, as well as other members of John's family. We extend our condolences to you. We acknowledge John's contribution to the parliament and his community and we record our appreciation for all that he has achieved. Vale, John Flynn.