



Speech By  
**David Crisafulli**


**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2024

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**Wood, Mr B, AM**

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.38 am): The opposition joins in supporting the motion moved by the Premier today. The House recognises the service of Bill Wood, a former member who holds a unique position in Queensland's political history—son of a Queensland parliamentarian, the twin of a Queensland parliamentarian and a member of two legislative assemblies. Bill Wood, whose time in this House was relatively short, has a record of accomplishment that comes directly from his commitment to his community, his desire to make a contribution to public life and a willingness to champion change in the face of opposition.

Bill Wood was born in Toowoomba, the son of Les Wood, the future member for the seats of East Toowoomba and North Toowoomba and briefly the leader of the opposition in this parliament. It was in his early years, and influenced by his dad's role, that Bill Wood developed an interest in the importance of parliament. He grew up in Toowoomba, was educated in Toowoomba and ultimately graduated from the then Queensland Teachers' College and from the University of Queensland with a degree in education. As a teacher and school principal, Bill Wood served in the Cairns area, developing the connections that would form the basis of his role as a successful parliamentarian.

In 1969 Bill Wood joined his twin Peter as a member of this House upon his election as the member for Cook. Peter had been elected as the member for Toowoomba East in 1966. In his first speech in this place Bill Wood spoke in glowing terms of his electorate when he said—

I believe it is the most interesting and most diverse electorate in all of Queensland and it is a great challenge for me to represent it.

He referred to the wide variety of industries which supported the Cook community: sugar, tobacco, cattle, fishing, mining, pearling and timber. He also referred to the growing tourism industry that would assume even greater importance in the ensuing decades. He spoke at length of the problems of isolation and the unique problems facing island communities, particularly Thursday Island. He saw the potential for tourism on Thursday Island but was equally conscious of the need for reliable water supplies, affordable air services and a radio station to help reduce isolation.

In an interesting contrast to the conditions under which the current generation of parliamentarians work, Bill Wood made two requests of the then premier: the availability of a casual typist for six hours a week, or access to a government office in Cairns so he could dictate letters. It was some years before members were granted staff or dedicated electoral officers. As a result of the redistribution of 1972, Bill Wood sought election to the new electorate of Barron River, becoming the first member for that new seat. He held Barron River for over two years; however, both he and his brother were defeated in 1974.

His commitment to Labor was never far from the surface, and he contested the federal seat of Leichhardt on two occasions in 1975 and 1977 when his party's stocks were not high. Bill Wood returned to the teaching profession but was drawn to the ACT through his interest as a teacher of children with

disabilities. When Bill Wood was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in 2013 he indicated that he 'couldn't keep out of politics' and that the overriding attraction for him was being able to contribute to the community.

Bill Wood was elected to the ACT Legislative Assembly in 1989, the first direct election to that legislature. Although no party won a majority of seats, the ALP formed a minority government. Bill Wood served in the Assembly until 2004 and held a series of ministerial portfolios, including arts, education, environment and disability services. His post-political life was devoted to the causes he had pursued in government, particularly the arts and the disability sector. He served as a chairman of Arthritis ACT and as patron for the not-for-profit disability organisation Abbeyfield ACT, a community housing provider. When being awarded his AM he summed up his attitude towards community service. He said—

There's literally thousands of groups out there, tens of thousands of people doing things, doing great things. I'm just one of those tens of thousands.

Whether it was serving his community in Far North Queensland or in the ACT, he put the needs and interests of others first. Today we welcome his wife, Beverley, and daughters, Andrea and Wendy, back to Parliament House, the place that saw his political career begin 55 years ago. All three have travelled a long way to get here. It was a privilege to spend some time with them this morning. We acknowledge his contribution to the House and his community and express our condolences on his passing.