

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

Tuesday, 5 June 2007

(Extract from book 8)

Internet: www.parliament.vic.gov.au/downloadhansard

By authority of the Victorian Government Printer

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Professor DAVID de KRETZER, AC

The Lieutenant-Governor

The Honourable Justice MARILYN WARREN, AC

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Minister for Victorian Communities and Minister for Energy and Resources	The Hon. P. Batchelor, MP
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Parliamentary Services — Secretary: Dr S. O'Kane

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Deputy Speaker: Ms A. P. BARKER

Acting Speakers: Ms Beattie, Ms Campbell, Mr Eren, Mrs Fyffe, Ms Green, Dr Harkness, Mr Howard, Mr Ingram, Mr Jasper, Mr Kotsiras, Mr Languiller, Mr Lupton, Ms Marshall, Ms Munt, Mr Nardella, Mrs Powell, Mr Seitz, Mr K. Smith, Mr Stensholt and Mr Thompson

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Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party and Deputy Premier:

The Hon. J. W. THWAITES

Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Leader of the Opposition:

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Deputy Leader of the Parliamentary Liberal Party and Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

The Hon. LOUISE ASHER

Leader of The Nationals:

Mr P. J. RYAN

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Kotsiras, Mr Nicholas	Bulleen	LP	Weller, Mr Paul	Rodney	Nats
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Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Derrimut	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Doncaster	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clayton	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

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Tuesday, 5 June 2007

The SPEAKER (Hon. Jenny Lindell) took the chair at 2.05 p.m. and read the prayer.

CONDOLENCES

Hon. Sidney James Plowman

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I move:

That this house expresses its sincere sorrow at the death of the Honourable Sidney James Plowman, and places on record its acknowledgement of the valuable services rendered by him to the Parliament and the people of Victoria as member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Evelyn from 1973 to 1982 and from 1985 to 1999, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 1979 to 1982 and from 1996 to 1999, and Minister Assisting the Treasurer on State Owned Enterprises and Minister for Energy and Minerals from 1992 to 1996.

The house is saddened by the passing of Jim Plowman on Thursday, 3 May 2007, aged 72. Jim Plowman, as this house and this community knows, made a tremendous contribution to political life in Victoria over a long period of time. He worked tirelessly for the Parliament and his electorate. He was a great advocate for issues affecting rural and regional Victorians, and he was also a well-known, well-liked and active member of his local community.

Jim Plowman was born in Melbourne on 13 December 1934 to Dr Sidney Plowman and his wife, Marjorie. He was educated at Geelong Grammar School and once described himself as ‘one of those school leavers who didn’t know what he wanted to do’ when he left school. On the advice of his family, however, he decided that a broad experience in life would be extremely valuable.

Following his education, Jim Plowman became an executive trainee for a Melbourne civil engineering firm and joined the national service. He later moved to Papua New Guinea, where he was employed on a coffee plantation and in a timber milling company and served in the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles from 1957 to 1959. He returned to Australia and worked as a jackaroo in Queensland and New South Wales. He was an overseer of the Nareen property in western Victoria, and then was on the family property in Benalla. In 1964 Mr Plowman moved to Glenburn, near Yea, where he very successfully farmed lambs, wool and beef cattle and was an active member of the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association.

The year of 1970 was a pivotal one for Jim Plowman. He was not only elected as a Yea shire councillor, a position he held for three years, but he also married

Prudence. Together they had three daughters and a son. Just three years later, in 1973, Jim Plowman entered state politics as the Liberal member for Evelyn. During his first year of parliamentary service, Jim was a member of several parliamentary committees, including the Public Servants Ethical Conduct Committee and the Conservation of Energy Resources Committee.

In 1979 he was elected Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, an honour which made him, at the age of 44, the youngest ever Speaker to that time. Jim Plowman later said it was the Speaker’s job to work in conjunction with senior members of all parties to ensure the Parliament functioned well as a Parliament, not as a tool of the executive government. He strove hard to achieve this goal and gained respect from all sides of the house over his period as Speaker.

Jim Plowman did not retain his seat in the 1982 election and returned to farming for a period. In 1985, however, he ran for and won back the seat of Evelyn and went on to serve with great distinction: firstly, as the shadow Minister for Energy and Minerals; secondly, as the Minister for Energy and Minerals and the Minister Assisting the Treasurer on State Owned Enterprises; and once again in a return position, as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly — a position he held until his retirement in 1999. I know that many members of this house remember Jim Plowman as I do, as both a minister of the Crown and a Speaker of this house. I certainly served as a member of Parliament when he was the Speaker and when he was a minister of the Crown.

Jim Plowman enjoyed a long and distinguished parliamentary career. He once said that the most important thing that a local member can do is be accessible to anyone and everyone in the electorate. Today is about acknowledging the immense contribution that Jim Plowman made both to his electorate and to Victoria.

On behalf of the Victorian government I offer my sincere condolences to the family of Jim Plowman, including his wife, Prue, who is here — and we are very grateful for her presence today — his children, Sophie, Lucinda, Prudence and James, his granddaughter, Amelia, his sister, Julie, and his brother, Tony. He will be sorely missed.

Mr BAILLIEU (Leader of the Opposition) — It is an honour, but a sad one, to join the Premier in the tribute in this Parliament to Jim Plowman.

Jim Plowman was a gentleman. He was a great and a proud Victorian. Personally I can say that in my time as

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Asher, Ms Louise	Brighton	LP	Lupton, Mr Anthony Gerard	Prahran	ALP
Baillieu, Mr Edward Norman	Hawthorn	LP	McIntosh, Mr Andrew John	Kew	LP
Barker, Ms Ann Patricia	Oakleigh	ALP	Maddigan, Mrs Judith Marilyn	Essendon	ALP
Batchelor, Mr Peter John	Thomastown	ALP	Marshall, Ms Kirstie	Forest Hill	ALP
Beattie, Ms Elizabeth Jean	Yuroke	ALP	Merlino, Mr James Anthony	Monbulk	ALP
Blackwood, Mr Gary John	Narracan	LP	Morand, Ms Maxine Veronica	Mount Waverley	ALP
Bracks, Mr Stephen Phillip	Williamstown	ALP	Morris, Mr David Charles	Mornington	LP
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Kosky, Ms Lynne Janice	Altona	ALP	Walsh, Mr Peter Lindsay	Swan Hill	Nats
Kotsiras, Mr Nicholas	Bulleen	LP	Weller, Mr Paul	Rodney	Nats
Langdon, Mr Craig Anthony Cuffe	Ivanhoe	ALP	Wells, Mr Kimberley Arthur	Scoresby	LP
Languiller, Mr Telmo Ramon	Derrimut	ALP	Wooldridge, Ms Mary Louise Newling	Doncaster	LP
Lim, Mr Muy Hong	Clayton	ALP	Wynne, Mr Richard William	Richmond	ALP

the state president of the Liberal Party for many years and as the vice-president over a nine-year period Jim was always supportive in his many roles and was always available, as he was for everybody in the community.

Some would have forgotten that Jim remained as the Speaker of this Parliament until November 1999 — several weeks after the 1999 election. Despite the disappointment, not of losing his own seat, because he was retiring, but of his side of politics not being successful, he calmly and confidently dealt with all the issues raised by an eager new government and a suite of new members who were all itching to find their feet. I can say that Jim Plowman's feet were always firmly on the ground. He did what he had to do, and he did it very professionally. I think that those who entered the Parliament in 1999 would recall that.

As the Premier said, Jim Plowman died at the age of 72 — too young, but what a great life and what a great legacy. He was a son, a brother, a loving husband, a father, a farmer and a friend, and he was an individual committed to hard work, to community service and to Victoria. Indeed he described himself in this house, and was acknowledged as such in terms of this house, as a servant of the Parliament.

Every individual who takes up community service does so without a care for the sacrifices involved. Those who become members of Parliament make many such sacrifices, and those who take senior office make more than their fair share. Those who reach the heights and who are defeated and return again show not only their commitment and passion but also their willingness to triumph over all the sacrifices they have had to make. Those sacrifices extend to family, to loved ones and to friends. Jim Plowman did all of that — and he did it with style. He took up the challenge, he absorbed the sacrifices and he insulated his family against them — and he did it all extremely well.

As the Premier said, Jim Plowman was educated at Mount Eliza State School and Geelong Grammar School, and then took a five-year traineeship with a civil engineering firm. Then Jim Plowman's education became the school of hard work, and that work included a number of years in Papua New Guinea on a coffee plantation and in timber mills. We can only imagine the richness of that experience. Indeed we can only imagine his time in the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles and his jackarooing in Queensland and New South Wales. That is a term we do not hear as much these days, but it was very much a common term in the life and times of Jim Plowman and his peers.

Then again, as the Premier said, he was a farm manager and indeed owned and ran his own property in central Victoria. Some 43 years ago he moved to Glenburn, which is not so far from Melbourne, in a beautiful valley nestled in the hills and what is now a magnificent property. Jim and his wife built a farm, built a home and established a family, and they have triumphed as farmers as well.

Jim Plowman's community service is equally fascinating. He was a national servicemen in the 1950s. That brigade of national servicemen had a different outlook from those who were national servicemen in the 1960s, and he was a proud national serviceman. He was a member of the Victorian Farmers Federation and its forebears, a Yea councillor for three years in the early 1970s, and the member for Evelyn in this Parliament for two stints — for nine years from 1973 to 1982, and for 14 years from 1985 to 1999, a total of 23 years service to this Parliament, which is a great contribution in itself.

Speaker, as you know, the challenges and opportunities of being Speaker are enormous, and Jim Plowman took them up as one of the youngest Speakers ever in 1979, serving for three years. On his return to Parliament he became Minister Assisting the Treasurer on State Owned Enterprises and Minister for Energy and Minerals, where he was instrumental in the early distribution of natural gas to country Victoria. Of course he was again Speaker from 1996 to 1999.

Jim Plowman, though, had many loves. Clearly the love of his life, Prue, is in the gallery with us today. His other loves included his immediate family, his children, his grandchildren and his extended family. He loved farming lambs, wool and beef cattle at their property, Erimbali, on that aptly named Break-o-Day Road in the hills. It is a beautiful place. Those who attended the service which was held for Jim could only have come away moved by the magic of the place, because it is certainly beautiful.

That service at home was attended by family and school friends. As members will know, Jim's brother, Tony, who retired from this house at the last election, gave a fantastic tribute to an older brother he obviously loved, admired and put on a pedestal. His tribute was magnificent — as was the singing at that service, full of the rusty passion of a choir of friends. It was a tribute given in song — and what a tribute it was. We heard *Nessun Dorma* sung by a friend, and Pavarotti could not have sung it with more affection. It was an extraordinary tribute. One of the great things about Jim Plowman was that he had the voice of a singer. It was also a voice that controlled this Parliament, and it was a

voice that won affection from all those he dealt with. It was most appropriate that he should be sung out in that way.

Jim Plowman was a great Liberal, he was a great parliamentarian, he was a great minister and he was a great Speaker. He was never the Grim Reaper, as he was sometimes cheekily described in this Parliament. He was just a firm and honest Speaker. He was also a great Victorian, but above all he was a great family man. I want to say that he was also a great individual who made sacrifices.

I proudly and warmly offer my condolences and a big hug to Prue and to their family, Sophie, Lucinda, Prudence and James, and their extended families. We thank you for the sacrifices you have made and for the service that Jim Plowman gave to this Parliament and to the people of Victoria. We sincerely wish you all the best. We trust and hope that Erimbali continues to flourish and that the great memories that Jim has provided to you and to all Victorians continue to fuel the fires at Erimbali and to warm your hearts. Our condolences go to you all.

Mr RYAN (Leader of The Nationals) — I join with the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in supporting on behalf of The Nationals this condolence motion on the passing of Jim Plowman.

Jim was first elected as the member for Evelyn in 1973. He was subsequently defeated but was then again elected — a tribute to the man and to what he was. Probably the best attribute, it seems to me, that he brought to this place was his life's experiences. He was a man of many parts. He was a qualified civil engineer. He served time in national service. He worked in Papua New Guinea in industries involving coffee and timber. He was a member of the Papua New Guinea Volunteer Rifles for about three years.

Subsequently in Australia he was a jackaroo and a manager of grazing properties. He moved to Glenburn in 1964, where he worked on the property there, raising fat lambs, growing wool and growing beef cattle. He qualified through the Australian Administrative Staff College. He was a member of the Victorian Farmers and Graziers Association and was a councillor of the then Shire of Yea. He was a man of many parts, and I think it is those many attributes which he brought to this Parliament that enabled him to make the tremendous contribution that he did.

He first spoke in this place on 25 October 1973. In the course of his maiden speech he talked about the issues that are important to country Victorians. He spoke

about his great love of the land, the various industries associated with it and the need for future growth, the things that underpinned it and the things that would need to be done to ensure that it would prosper in time to come. He was true to all those things until he finally departed this place upon his retirement. He had periods of distinguished parliamentary service. He served on various committees, and he had ministerial roles.

As a raw backbencher I had occasion to deal with Jim in several instances. The first of those that remains in mind was when I worked with him when he was the energy minister and was endeavouring to establish a wind farm at Toora in my electorate. One cannot but think about life's ironies, Speaker. Unfortunately, as it happened we could not quite bring it to be, and it happened subsequently that the facility was established. It is just an instance of how one's views about the world can wax and wane with the passage of time. The point is that he was unfailingly direct, he was always so easy to approach and he was wonderful in dealing with people, including those whom I brought to Parliament House to talk to about that project. At all times he was a terrific fellow with whom to have that association.

He occupied on two occasions the critical role of Speaker, and in the tradition of this place to this day, he fulfilled that role so very well. I must say that an outstanding memory is an instance in the latter part of term of the previous government when a motion on a matter of urgent public importance, which was the term used then, was to be moved on a Wednesday morning. I think the motion was moved by the then Leader of the Opposition, the present Treasurer.

I had asked the then Leader of Government Business, Phil Gude, whether it was likely that I would need to speak on a general business notice of motion that was due to follow the urgent matter of public importance. He assured me that such was not the case and that invariably these matters when raised would be approved by the Speaker — in this case, Speaker Plowman.

At about 10.05 a.m., in the first 5 minutes of that debate, it became apparent that Speaker Plowman was about to refuse the application for debate on the urgent matter of public importance. From his spot on the front bench Phil Gude turned to me, on the back benches, and nodded. At about 10.08 a.m. I was on my feet in the presence of Speaker Plowman, and at about 30 seconds before 1.00 p.m., I sat down. The member for Bendigo West, who was then a raw backbencher, got up and made a great contribution for 22 seconds, and we all went to lunch!

Throughout it all, bewigged Speaker Plowman was stoic. He sat through it all and conducted himself in a manner that I think would ultimately have had him out the back wondering what the heck had just happened. But that story is a reflection of the way in which he performed his role with complete impartiality. He always heard the arguments out and made his rulings, and he was very strong in what he had to say. He was very highly respected by all members in the chamber.

He passed away at the age of 72 on 3 May. With many others I had the great honour to be at Erimbali when the memorial service was conducted there on 10 May. Inasmuch as these can be wonderful occasions, it was truly a wonderful event. We were welcomed by Prue, even though her heart must have been breaking. The children participated in different ways. There was a great speech by Jim's brother, Tony, who spoke as brothers do about their brothers on these occasions.

My favourite story, which I thought Tony told very well on that day, was the one about the pigeons. When Jim was boarding he had a very good business in selling homing pigeons, safe in the knowledge that his stock never ran out.

It was, as I said, a magnificent day conducted in the gardens of their beautiful home. The day, I think, was a testament to the strength of the man, and the wonderful closeness of the family and their remarkable feelings for each other truly came through that day. Everyone there was honoured and privileged to be present.

On behalf of The Nationals I join in this condolence motion, and I pass on commiserations to Prue, Sophie, Lucinda, Prudence and James, to Sam and granddaughter Amelia, who I know was truly a great joy to Jim in his last days, and of course to Julie as well. Jim Plowman truly was an honourable man.

Mr BATCHELOR (Minister for Energy and Resources) — I join with the leaders of this Parliament and other members to pay my respects to Jim Plowman and to offer my condolences to his wife, Prudence, and their children and to his brother, Tony. It is an honour to speak on this condolence motion for Jim Plowman.

Jim, as we have heard, was first elected to Parliament in 1973 as the member for Evelyn. He held that seat until his defeat in 1982, and then he was re-elected in 1985 and held the seat until his retirement in 1999. It is no secret that Jim was very proud to represent the electorate of Evelyn. He championed with great passion the interests of his constituents, particularly the primary producers and those in the timber industry. Prior to entering Parliament Jim was a farmer and grazier and

had held an array of really fascinating jobs in Australia and in Papua New Guinea in the 1950s. He eventually settled in Glenburn, near Yea, where he raised fat lambs and farmed sheep and beef cattle.

I remember Jim most clearly from his time as Speaker in the period 1996–99. During that period I acted as manager of opposition business and of course had dealings with Jim on a daily basis when Parliament was sitting, so I came to know him especially well, even though we were on opposite sides of the political chamber. If I remember correctly, in 1996 Jim was bestowed the great honour of being elected unopposed as Speaker. He took seriously the responsibility attached to the role of Speaker and did his best to be impartial.

As Speaker I believe his greatest contribution to parliamentary democracy was following the 1999 election, which saw the unexpected defeat of the then government — Jim's party. As members will recall, there was that long period between when the election was held and when the new government was finally able to be installed. It was, I remind the house, installed as a minority government in both houses. Those were tense and uncertain times for the Victorian Parliament, but during that period Jim was impeccable as he continued to hold the official position of Speaker. He did not allow or create opportunities for mischief. He allowed the parliamentary and democratic processes to unfold and ensured a smooth transition in those particular circumstances.

I would also like to talk about Jim's contribution to the state in his other role — that is, in his capacity as a Minister for Energy and Minerals, or the energy and resources portfolio, as it is now known. This is a position that Jim and I have in common. Whether or not you agree with his policies when he held that role as Minister for Energy and Minerals, nobody can doubt that Jim oversaw the most comprehensive overhaul of the energy industry this state has ever seen. I am talking about the privatisation of the State Electricity Commission — a move which gave rise to some very colourful debates in this chamber.

The overhaul occurred in two stages, the first stage commencing in 1993, when we saw the disaggregation and corporatisation of the State Electricity Commission. The second stage saw the corporatised components sold to private entities. Regardless of the opinions each of us holds about the privatisation of the energy industry in Victoria, it was perhaps the largest and most controversial project to be undertaken during Jim's term as Minister for Energy and Minerals. Jim's commitment to the project must be acknowledged. In

that sense the project was a defining part of Jim's political career and one that I am sure he took great pride in.

The privatisation of Victoria's energy industry has undoubtedly become part of Jim's legacy and the framework he created is one I have inherited in my current role of Minister for Energy and Resources. It is for this reason that Jim's legacy has had, and will continue to have, a large influence on my work in this portfolio and the work of other ministers who will follow.

Jim was a dedicated parliamentarian and he was a well-respected colleague of many of us who are here in the Parliament today. I offer my condolences to Prue and their family and to his brother, Tony. Jim will be sorely missed by many Victorians, especially his colleagues in the Parliament, both past and present, and of course by his former constituents in Evelyn.

Ms ASHER (Brighton) — I too would like to contribute briefly to this condolence motion for the Honourable Jim Plowman. As a number of members also wish to speak, I propose to be quite brief. I served two terms in Parliament with Jim, who had a particularly long and distinguished career, as has already been outlined. He served two terms as Speaker, from 1979 to 1982 under a previous Liberal government, and from 1996 to 1999.

In doing a bit of background work for this I noticed that Jim told the *Age* of 16 May 1979 that he, when he first stood for the position of Speaker, 'defeated six other contenders for the job — without lobbying', which truly struck me as one of the great political achievements of modern times. He was a minister in the government from 1992 to 1996, and his roles as Minister for Energy and Minerals and Minister Assisting the Treasurer on State Owned Enterprises, and prior to that, shadow Minister for Energy and Minerals from 1990 to 1992, have already been outlined.

He served as the member for Evelyn on two occasions. It often strikes me that, after being defeated as a member of Parliament, it shows enormous strength of character to put your hand up again and have another crack at it. For that, he and others should be commended.

His background, which included farming and a broad range of other activities, has been spoken of by a number of members. He commenced his political involvement as a councillor in the Yea shire. He, as all parliamentarians do, had a number of key

achievements. The primary one, of course, was his role in the reform of Victoria's electricity industry, but I also think one of his outstanding achievements in both his terms as Speaker — and I obviously have more familiarity with his second term — was the high standards that he set in that job.

I notice the Premier must have also read the *Alexandra & Eildon Standard* of 12 October 1983, where Jim said:

The Speaker works in conjunction with senior members of all parties to ensure the Parliament functions well as a Parliament, not as a tool of the executive government.

I can certainly say that, while I was a member of the upper house when I was a minister, on more than one occasion Speaker Plowman advised me of the forms of the lower house and told me that, simply because things occurred in the upper house, it did not mean that procedurally they occurred in this place.

On a personal note, he was a thorough gentleman, and I have to say that is not a universal characteristic in politics. Every single dealing I had with him was the dealing of a man who was an utter gentleman. My condolences are extended to Jim's family, and we will miss him greatly.

Mrs MADDIGAN (Essendon) — I rise to offer my condolences, along with other members, in relation to Jim Plowman, who served 23 years in this place, which is a fine record for anyone to have. Jim was one of a small band of people — 34, I think — to have taken on the role of Speaker. I think it says something about his bravery and courage that he took the job on twice. He had difficult parliaments to oversee both times.

During the first time Jim was Speaker — from 1979 to 1982 — the Legislative Assembly was a tied house, so on a number of occasions he was put in the position that all Speakers hate — that is, having to use a casting vote. The fact that he managed to do so and still retain the confidence of the house says a great deal about his open-mindedness and fair-mindedness.

The second time he was Speaker — from 1996 to 1999 — was when I was first elected, and I think that was a difficult Parliament to oversee as well. A lot of new Labor Party members were keen to get into government and did not always make life easy for the Speaker at that time; and of course Jim had to deal with Jeff Kennett on the other side of the house, so all in all he had a fairly busy time of it.

Jim was a very dignified Speaker. I am reminded of a story the staff told me once about him. One of the

clerks, who is not here anymore, was very keen to know a bit more about the Speaker than the Speaker wished to tell him and so was speculating on where he might be going for his holidays. Finally the Clerk gathered the courage to address the Speaker and ask him where he was going, at which Jim turned to him and said, 'North', which I think fairly much put the Clerk in his place!

Bob Cameron, the member for Bendigo West, and I have a particular reason for remembering Jim Plowman — a reason for which we did not thank him at the time. In the 1996–99 Parliament divisions were still counted in the old way, which meant that members of Parliament — normally very new members — were asked to count members votes. Doing so meant recording each and every name, which was a bit of a test for you if you had only recently been elected, especially as members on both sides were always very helpful in claiming their name was something else or otherwise trying to misguide you in your counting.

One day Bob and I were called to the Speaker's office. That did not happen very frequently, so we were a little nervous and anxious and tried to think of what we might have done wrong. When we got to his office we found that Jim had concluded that Bob and I were the two fastest counters on the government side so he had decided that we would count every division from thereon in. He thought that was a terrific idea! Perhaps it worked well, but Bob and I did not thank him as we left his office. However, we learnt all the members names fairly quickly, so I suppose there was a positive element to it.

Jim did his job with a great deal of grace and elegance, and he was very well respected by the staff who worked at Parliament House. It is very sad that, after his leaving Parliament only a short time ago, we are speaking to a condolence motion for him. I join current members and all those members who were here during his time as Speaker in passing on my commiserations to Jim's family. We remember him for all the positive things he did for the Parliament and government of Victoria.

Mrs FYFFE (Evelyn) — It is great honour to stand here as the current member for Evelyn and speak on the condolence motion for Jim Plowman. I extend the deepest and warmest sympathy of the past and present branch members of the electorate of Evelyn and my own personal sympathy to Prue, Sophie, Lucinda, Prudence and James, and Jim's brother, Tony.

My husband, Dave, and I first met Jim in about 1976, after he had been a member of Parliament for three years. We saw Jim often over the following years,

either at meetings or community functions or when he just called in at the vineyard for a chat. The conversation often turned to jackerooing. My husband was also a jackaroo for a few years after he left school, and they told each other stories, which over the years grew with the telling, of how they managed and sheared the sheep, occasionally slaughtering them for the dogs, as well as all the other things that jackaroos talk about. He also talked a lot about farming. I come from a farming background — a microscopic little farm in England — and he talked about his farming background as well.

We talked about teenagers — we had large families — and our conversations about them ranged widely. I think Jim's much-loved children would all be totally embarrassed at some of the things we talked about! We talked about hairstyles at one stage, or perhaps it was the lack of hairstyles that we both ranted and raved about. We also talked about our mixed feelings when our children were overseas on various projects. We felt a mixture of pride and anxiety as we worried about them. Perhaps it was because after a little while the letters and phone calls did not come as fast as we may have wanted them to. Jim and I often exchanged such comments. Sometimes months would go by before I would bump into him again, but our conversations would always be about our families.

My husband, David, and I were involved in many election campaigns in the Upper Yarra. Last night David talked about the time he sat in Jim's panel van in the main street of Yarra Junction, supposedly helping Jim fold brochures to hand out to people as he went past. But my husband said that he seemed to be doing all the folding while Jim was outside talking to all the people in the street. Jim was a great man to work with on campaigns and was widely accepted by everyone. He was an excellent local member, and many people have come into my electorate office just to talk about him.

In fact it is the same office that Jim first moved into in 1979 with Gracia Baylor, a former member for Boronia Province. I have a newspaper clipping with a photograph of Jim with Gracia and Marshall Baillieu, who was then the federal member for La Trobe. Prior to moving into that office Jim had worked from his farm at Glenburn.

The people who have called in to speak about Jim and relay fond memories have ranged from branch members to long-time farmers and have included several longstanding members of the Labor Party. It really shows the style of the man and how highly he was regarded by long-term opponents. With genuine

warmth and smiles they have related stories of working on campaign booths and their meetings with Jim over various issues. They talk about his gentle smile, his ironic wit and how he never seemed to get flustered, even when the campaigning became a little bit aggressive.

June Delbridge, a longstanding branch member, sent me a note, and I would like to quote from it. It reads:

All those who knew Jim through politics, friendship and his ability to respect the multitude of diverse opinions and beliefs within the community, bear testament to his public and private persona.

Jim enjoyed his many political roles, including Speaker of the house, but he always remained the member for Evelyn. The many branch members, past and present, will always remember those years of work and representation for everyone within the electorate.

I also received a letter from someone whom I have never met — a Mr John Rush, who worked within government circles — and I would like to quote part of that letter. Mr Rush's job was to oversee the necessary protocols for ministers who travelled overseas. He said in his letter:

Often ministers ... used to give me boxes of receipts for expenses and say 'You work it out', but ... not Jim. He had a statement already made out when he returned detailing only the amounts he wished to claim. I quizzed him about this, because he hadn't claimed his full statutory entitlements, and he said to me, 'No, that's all I want'. I ... asked Jim why he wasn't claiming the standard \$40 daily allowance for his wife who travelled with him, and he said, 'I can't see why the taxpayers should have to pay that allowance — if we were at home and she wanted to buy something she wouldn't get an allowance, would she?' That sort of logic was so rare among the ministers I served or had dealings with, but it was refreshing, and it summed up Jim.

...

Jim Plowman was a special man whom I shall remember most fondly.

Jim was an excellent member and an excellent minister, but his love of farming, country people and their way of life shone through in everything he did. In his first speech as a member of this Parliament on 25 October 1972 he demonstrated that he had a good understanding of and empathy with all the diverse issues in this huge electorate. At that time it covered 2500 square miles, but even then he saw the tourism potential and the difficulties that farmers were facing with urban growth and land prices. The Leader of The Nationals alluded to how he understood the timber industry and the difficulties it was facing. Jim fought long and hard for the timber industry. He talked about the need for education and how national parks must be balanced

with the needs of the industry and the need for building materials.

As has been said before, Jim was elected Speaker of this house in 1979, the youngest person ever to be elected Speaker, and he filled that role admirably. When he lost the seat in 1982, I know how he must have felt — it is devastating when you lose a seat — but he won it back again in 1985. After a period in opposition he became the Minister for Energy and Minerals. That was a time for change, as the Leader of the Government has said. I do not think *Hansard* extracts could possibly convey the tenor of the debate at that time. I can imagine how heated it became, but reading those extracts it sounds as if Jim remained calm, in control and polite, as always.

Jim was very supportive of me in many ways over the years. I particularly remember a deb ball I went to — it was the first deb ball I had ever been to in my life. I had had an invitation and went along, and then it dawned on me that I was actually expected to perform a function. Jim and I went down to receive the debts, and he said, 'Now we go and make a speech'. I was horrified. I said, 'What am I going to say?'. He said, 'Just say nice things', and then he referred to a speech that Prue might remember I made at Warburton a few weeks before that, which in hindsight I realised was rather long and boring.

Jim gently said to me, 'Just make a short speech this time', and he looked after me with that advice. When I became a commissioner and was talking to him about my role he said, 'Read the executive summary of all the reports, but make sure you read the actual report so you do not miss the things that they do not want you to know'. He was extremely supportive of me. After he had decided that he was going to retire in 1999 he asked me to stand for the seat of Evelyn. A few months after the election I bumped into Jim in the main street of Lilydale. He looked so well and happy. I think he was still wearing the tweed jacket that I reckon he had been wearing for about 20 years, but he looked great. I came back into the house a week later and spoke to his brother, Tony. I said how amazingly well Jim looked, and Tony looked at me and said, 'Yes, people think I am the older brother!'

After I lost the seat in 2002, and I was devastated by that loss, it was hard to decide what to do. It was Jim's example of how he came back again that gave me the confidence to stand and come back into Parliament.

The celebration of Jim's life at the property he loved so much — that absolutely beautiful property — was both a moving and a happy celebration. I would like to quote

from a poem which was read by his daughter Sophie, which I think is absolutely tremendous. It is called *The Dash*:

I read of a man who stood to speak
At a funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on her tombstone
From the beginning and to the end.

He noted that first came the date of her birth
And spoke the following date with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years.

I will just go to the end of it, because I realise we have limited time:

If we treat each other with respect
And more often wear a smile,
Remembering that this special dash
Might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is being read
With your life's actions to rehash,
Would you be proud of the things they say
About how you spent your dash?

Sidney James Plowman — Gentleman Jim — spent his dash exceedingly well.

Mr ROBINSON (Mitcham) — I am honoured to contribute briefly to this afternoon's debate on the condolence motion with respect to the late Jim Plowman.

It is fair to say that I did not know Jim Plowman as well as some members of this place, including a number of members opposite. He was, however, the Speaker of this chamber for the second time when I entered this place for the first time in early 1998. It is fair to say that at that time the circumstances for the government, of which Jim Plowman was a member, were not ideal. It is also fair to say that in the grand tradition of this place the government members of the day were of the view that the first few weeks in the chamber for a new member who had been elected at a by-election should be made as uncomfortable as possible — and that is a view that has not changed. But it was a view that held no sway with Jim Plowman.

Following my inaugural speech he invited me into chambers for a cup of tea, which was very much standard practice for new members. We went through the niceties and formalities, but then he went out of his way to offer assistance. He stressed that this was going to be a valuable experience for me, one that I should value and make the most of. He spoke at some length about that and concluded by insisting that if there was

anything that I needed advice or assistance on, I should not hesitate to speak to him.

As a new member I suppose at the time I did not really think much about that offer, but in every respect he was true to his word. There were a number of occasions in the ensuing 18 months while he remained Speaker when I sought his advice and his assistance on the forms and procedures of the house and all sorts of matters. On every occasion he was of great assistance.

It is undoubtedly the case that Jim Plowman made my early time here far more productive and satisfying than it otherwise would have been, and I am very grateful for his advice and help in that respect. Although, as the member for Essendon has reminded me, new members at that time got press-ganged into the duties of a teller, and I will confess to thinking that it was not such a good move by him, in retrospect, of course, it added to one's appreciation of this place and its traditions.

I remain very grateful for Jim's constructive advice and help. That he would extend such assistance and courtesy to me, a then opposition member, I am sure would come as no surprise to his family. At this very difficult time for them I would like to join with others in extending to them my personal sympathy.

Mr WELLS (Scoresby) — Sidney James Plowman, known to all of us as Jim, was born on 13 December 1934 and sadly passed away on Thursday, 3 May 2007. He was a husband, a father and a proud grandfather.

Recently I had the great honour of speaking in Wodonga at the retirement dinner for Tony Plowman, who is Jim's brother. It was a happy occasion with lots of laughs and memories of days gone by. There was a very large crowd, and the function was enjoyed by all. When it was Tony's turn to respond to the speeches and he referred to his brother Jim, it was with a real touch of sadness, because Jim was unable to be there because of his illness. Everyone in the room immediately realised that Jim's illness was serious, and we were all made aware of the strong bond between two incredible brothers. People at the retirement dinner referred to Tony Plowman as a true gentleman and a statesman. It must be a family trait. These two words are exactly how I would sum up Jim Plowman.

Jim Plowman lead an incredible life — national service in 1955, working in Papua New Guinea on coffee plantations and timber mills, jackaroo, farmer, grazier and politician. Jim was elected to Parliament in the Legislative Assembly seat of Evelyn in May 1973, aged 38. He represented that seat until February 1982, when he was defeated, but typical of a Plowman's

never-say-die attitude, he fought the April 1985 state election and won.

His parliamentary career shows that he achieved extraordinary heights. At 44, as was mentioned earlier, he was elected Speaker of the house during the Hamer government. As the member for Brighton said, he defeated six other contenders without having to lobby anyone for that role.

I really got to know Jim when he was the Minister for Energy and Minerals between 1992 and 1996 and afterwards when he returned to the role of Speaker between 1996 and 1999. Jim always had time for everyone regardless of who you were — a minister was treated the same way as a fresh-faced backbencher. Regardless of the pressure he was under as a minister, he never showed it to backbenchers. When he became Speaker in 1996 he gave an immediate presence to the authority of the Chair. His commanding voice, his steely glare and his measured rulings ensured that the chamber ran efficiently.

After Jim retired in 1999 he was still seen around Parliament, but mostly he was here to see Tony. Whenever he saw me we would always chat about current events, and he continued to keep up to date with the Liberal parliamentary party. Jim was indeed one of nature's true gentleman. He will be sadly missed. My deepest condolences to Prue, Sophie, Lucinda, Prudence and James, and to Tony, Jen and their families.

Mr SEITZ (Keilor) — I join with the other members of this house in extending my condolences to the Plowman family. I got to know Jim Plowman when he was re-elected to this Parliament and was appointed to a parliamentary committee of which I was a member when we worked on the corporatisation of the then State Electricity Commission of Victoria, which was the main distributor of electricity in this state. Working on a parliamentary committee together gave us an opportunity to get to know each other. We worked on the report's recommendations to the Parliament on corporatising the SECV. His contribution to that committee was quite significant. He joked by saying, 'Maybe one day I will have to implement this report'.

Of course a former member of the other place, Bill Landeryou, who was the chair of the committee said, 'No way, it will not happen. We will not let it happen. We will win the election'. As history has shown, Jim Plowman became the minister who implemented the recommendations in that report which the committee wrote during the Cain and Kirner Labor governments.

Many of the recommendations in the report were implemented by Jim, as the energy minister at the time.

Having said that, the committee structure of this Parliament allows many people from opposite sides of politics to get to know each other and to really work for the benefit of the Victorian people. Throughout the writing of that report the committee members worked hard and came up with a consensus opinion. It was a controversial report, and the committee had a flamboyant chair in Bill Landeryou. The inquiry had been lengthy, and the committee and its staff did a lot of work on it. The corporatisation of the SEC was controversial so far as the Labor Party was concerned at the time, but we were able to work through the inquiry and present a unanimous report to Parliament.

On his election to the position of Speaker, Jim Plowman again gave that air and impression of having a calm attitude to the job, and he treated everybody equally. In my case, having been appointed as an Acting Speaker, one evening he and I had a discussion. Up until then it had been a tradition — and as previous members have said earlier, Mr Plowman was very much into and upheld tradition — that the Deputy Speaker, who was also Chair of Committees, would chair the adjournment debate.

However, Jim thought the Acting Speakers should take on that task. He approached me and asked if I would be the first Acting Speaker to chair the adjournment debate, after which others would follow suit. After he coached me in his chambers, Jim came into the house and made the announcement that I, as an Acting Speaker, would be chairing the adjournment debate — the first time that that long-held tradition in this chamber was changed.

Along with his coaching on chairing the adjournment debate there was also this advice: 'George, before you go into the chamber for the adjournment debate, go into the bar and see who has been drinking what and how many reds they have consumed, so that when the debate gets argumentative you know how to deal with it and you know to whom you should give some leeway, where you can be stern, and when you need to use discretion'. Of course, nowadays you can go out to the bar in the evenings and find it empty all the time. It was a different story in those days.

I appreciated Jim's coaching and advice, and I am sure he did that with many other temporary chairs. He took members aside and personally coached them: he explained the tempers of individual members and ministers on his own side, pointing out whom you could pull up and whom you could or should not, and

how to control the house. The adjournment debates in particular used to be very fierce at times. In that era members could be very argumentative.

I appreciated his coaching at the time. It gave me the confidence to chair the adjournment debate. Chairing the chamber during normal parliamentary debates could be fairly quiet — members would make speeches without any controversy — but the adjournment debates used always to be controversial. As I just said, the chairing of adjournment debates by Acting Speakers was a new system introduced under Speaker Plowman.

Members will notice that the volumes of acts on the table in the chamber now have clipboards attached to them; they contain running sheets as to who the next speakers in a debate will be. I, as party whip, brought in that practice, although some members were concerned, when Jim Plowman was elected Speaker, that because of his stand on tradition he would not allow those sheets on the clipboards in the chamber.

Jim was very much a traditionalist, even deciding to wear the wig again in the house during his time as Speaker. But he went with the times and accepted change, so now those practices in the house are well accepted, as is the loudspeaker system here.

Speaker Plowman tried to get wired — he tried carrying a mobile microphone on him — but that was not too successful and he had to use a fixed microphone, like the rest of us. So he tried many innovations. Although many said he was traditional, he was basically following the rules of this place. Jim was a gentleman, as other members have pointed out, and in his position as Speaker he treated everyone equally.

I extend my condolences to Jim's family. It is my pleasure to have known Jim Plowman, and to have served here with him was a great experience for me.

Mr THOMPSON (Sandringham) — 'Dignified', 'fair minded', 'resilient', 'determined' and 'a very high sense of community-mindedness' are the words that come to mind when I reflect upon the life of Jim Plowman — and also, I might add, the life of his brother, who is with us today. The Plowman brothers served a record combined term of 37 years in the Victorian Parliament, each representing a different part of the state. In the case of Jim it was the electorate of Evelyn, which takes in some magnificent farming country with its great hills, from where people have no doubt taken many prizes for their produce at the Royal Melbourne Show. Tony represented the electorate of

Benambra — the high country — with the highest mountain and some of the best country in the state.

Our contributions to this chamber are measured in different ways. This is the fifth condolence motion for a Kennett government minister in this arena in the past seven years, following those for Vin Heffernan, Marie Tehan, Ann Henderson and Michael John. It is perhaps a salutary reminder to all of us that our time here is very much temporary, both in electoral cycle terms and in wider terms. Our contributions are measured through *Hansard* and our electorates, and in Jim's case the parliamentary library records many of the different elements of his contributions to the townships of Healesville and Yarra Glen and to local schools in Lilydale and Coldstream in his district.

There are the local remembrances as well as the remembrances in this chamber, including the many rulings by Speaker Plowman which govern the conduct of our debates. There are also the contributions that will be remembered through his family, who are with us in the chamber today: Prue, Sophie, Lucinda, Prudence and James, and his other family members, including his brother, Tony, and sister-in-law, Jenny.

There are a number of other comments I could make. At the funeral there was the very fine story of Jim's early enterprise in which he found that by selling homing pigeons at a good rate — his stock was replenished almost on a daily basis! — he had an opportunity to prosper, until his father found out about the enterprise and he was constructively guided thereafter. There were other occasions in the chamber and beyond involving Jim of which I have very fond memories. He and the former member for Forest Hill used to sometimes have lunch off site, where they would review the arena of Parliament. Along with a member for Higinbotham Province and a member for Gippsland Province in the other place I had the opportunity to serve on a committee that oversaw some issues in Jim's energy and minerals portfolio.

During the reform period from 1992 to 1996 the members of the then government faced many challenging moments when addressing public meetings. On one occasion one of the Plowman brothers was attending a country church service during which the vicar of the day moved from matters spiritual to matters more temporal as he gave his view of the world and a number of the reform processes. At the conclusion of the sermon one of the Plowman brothers stood up and, with the dignity typical of the Plowmans, said, 'Would you mind if I had a right of reply?'. That particular approach, which was courteous, dignified, determined

and fair minded, very much characterised the life of Jim in the parliamentary arena.

I would like to conclude by referring to Erimbali, a property that Jim bought in 1964. He converted what I understand to have been a treeless wasteland into a magnificent and productive farm with fat and wool lambs and beef cattle. He planted a garden there, and on the day of the funeral it was moving to see the driveway of pin oaks that will serve as a memorial to him in the minds of his friends and family.

A gathering of over 350 people attended this service, with the sound of Italian opera rising in the background, sung in both rustic and fine fashion by friends close to him. It was a surreal autumnal day in Australia that very much provided an appropriate backdrop and a lasting background to the wonderful contribution that Jim Plowman made to this chamber, to his family and to his local community.

Mr HARDMAN (Seymour) — It is an honour to join the condolence motion for the late Honourable Jim Plowman. I wish to pass on my deepest sympathies to his wife, Prue, and his family.

Jim lived in the Seymour electorate, and after I became the member for Seymour I came to know Jim a little through his and Prue's active involvement in the local community and in improving our community. The words that come to mind when describing Jim are that he was a true gentleman and that he was a decent bloke who took the time to get to know you, much like his brother, Tony, whom I knew in this place between 1999 and 2006.

Jim had an esteemed career, serving as Minister Assisting the Treasurer on State Owned Enterprises and Minister for Energy and Minerals from 1992 to 1996 and as Speaker of this house between 1979 and 1982, and 1996 and 1999.

Jim was a very personable man. I can recall several conversations with him which included advice from him on how to be a good member of Parliament and what he felt the electorate expects of you in carrying out your role. The Evelyn electorate once covered part of the Seymour electorate, and I would like to pass on the appreciation of the people whom Jim represented in this Parliament and thank him for all he did for our communities in his time as member for Evelyn. I extend my deepest sympathies to Prue and their children.

Mr DIXON (Nepean) — It is an honour to say a few words today about the Honourable Jim Plowman. I got to know Jim in 1996 during the election campaign.

About one week into that campaign I suddenly became the Liberal candidate for Dromana because the former member had decided not to go on. I was on a very steep learning curve, and Jim Plowman was assigned to be my minder. He was sent down to the peninsula, and he helped me with some doorknocking, but most importantly he helped me with practical advice and he calmed me down a lot. My wife was on an even steeper learning curve than I was, and he had some very kind words for her and was able to put her at ease about what was to happen over the coming few weeks and the massive change that was to come about in our lives.

After I was elected in 1996 he took a special interest in my career. He was always ready to give me some feedback about what I was doing in my electorate and also about my performance in Parliament. Like the members for Essendon and Bendigo West, I became one of his victim tellers. I presume I was a good counter as well — that might have been the reason. I thought he liked me, but he seemed to be picking on me as a teller. Like the member for Essendon, I soon learnt the names of all the members here.

Jim had a peninsula connection, which I think was briefly mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition. Jim originally came from the Mornington Peninsula, and Plowman House, which I think was the Plowman residence where Jim's father was a doctor, still stands. It is still called Plowman House, and it still has a Liberal connection — it is the office of Bruce Billson, the federal member for Dunkley. Jim always reminded me of that, and Tony did as well.

My sister-in-law works for a community organisation in Lilydale and has for a number of years. She is of the far-left variety of sister-in-law, and she is a great person. We have a funny family, as I sometimes mention. She spoke to me often about Jim and his genuine love for and knowledge of his community. He really knew his community, and his community was at the centre of his heart and at the centre of his work. She often commented to me about that. She did not think that Liberal politicians should be like that — other than me — but she thought he was a wonderful person.

Jim was a gentleman. He was selfless, he was intelligent and he was stable, and those are the qualities of an exceptional and honourable member of Parliament. They are qualities that every human being should aspire to. I would like to extend my condolences to Prue and Jim's family, and especially to my friend Tony, his brother. May Jim Plowman rest in peace.

Mr HODGETT (Kilsyth) — I join with the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of

The Nationals and members in paying my respects to the late Sidney James Plowman. I extend my condolences and sympathy to Jim's wife, Prue, and Jim's family.

I first met Jim during the time I served as a councillor and mayor with the Shire of Yarra Ranges and worked with him on many local issues up to the time of his retirement from politics in 1999. Jim provided some good advice, having himself served as a local government councillor with the former Shire of Yea in the 1970s. As we have heard today, before retiring from politics in 1999 Jim served the electorate of Evelyn for two spells, totalling more than 20 years in the Victorian Parliament. He was Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 1979 to 1982, served as Minister for Energy and Minerals in the Kennett government from 1992 to 1996, and then served a second term as Speaker from 1996 to 1999.

Jim was proud of being Speaker and was respected by both sides of the Parliament. In fact I recall one occasion which showed how proud Jim was of being Speaker. I found myself at a lunch at the Lilydale Heights Secondary College home economics restaurant. I was sitting with Bob Halverson, the then federal member for Casey and Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jim Plowman, who was then the member for Evelyn and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Throughout the entire meal neither used each other's Christian names and continually referred to one another as 'Mr Speaker'. I am sure the students at the lunch thought the whole thing was quite odd.

On a serious note, Jim was a great bloke. He worked hard for his local area and superbly represented his community. Jim Plowman was a true gentleman, and was known to people as Gentleman Jim. I respected Jim and admired him for the terrific example he set in working tirelessly for his community. I again extend my sincere condolences to all of the family, and thank Jim Plowman for the contribution he made to our community.

Mr BURGESS (Hastings) — It is my privilege to join in this condolence motion for the Honourable Sidney James Plowman. As the Leader of the Opposition stated, it is a great honour, but it is a very sad one. Sidney James Plowman, or Jim, was born on 13 December 1934 in Melbourne and he passed away on 3 May. He will be sadly missed by his family, his friends, his colleagues and the broader community; in fact all who knew him. I did not have the pleasure of serving in this house with Jim Plowman, but I would have been very proud to do so.

Jim was educated at Mount Eliza state school, and further education was obtained at Geelong Grammar School. Born in Frankston, Jim later moved onto the land with his parents. Instead of following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, who were both doctors, Jim chose to start his working life as a cadet with a civil engineering firm in Melbourne. After five years he went to New Guinea to study primary production. After his return to Australia Jim worked as a jackaroo and station manager, and at one time managed Malcolm Fraser's property, Nareen. His marriage in 1970 to Prudence Sophie Manifold resulted in three daughters and a son, and recently a grandchild.

Jim was elected as the member for Evelyn in May 1973 and served until 1982. He was then re-elected in April 1985 and served until his retirement in 1999. Jim was passionate about his community. He was the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 1979 to 1982 and from 1996 to 1999, and Minister for Energy and Minerals from 1992 until 1996. His appointment as Speaker was a great honour for Jim, but at the time he said with great conviction that his role as Speaker and the consequent inability to speak in Parliament was not going to disadvantage his constituents. He made it very clear at the time that he was going to take every opportunity in the party room to make himself heard and therefore have his electorate represented on legislation and other matters that came before the Parliament.

Jim will be remembered as a highly esteemed colleague of those who served with him in the Parliament of Victoria and also as a hardworking local member who remained family focused whilst serving the community in a variety of appointments. Jim Plowman was a great family man and a great parliamentarian. In fact Jim Plowman was a great man.

Mrs SHARDEY (Caulfield) — I rise to join this condolence motion for Sidney James Plowman. I offer my sincere sympathy to his wife, Prue, his brother, Tony, and Jim's children and grandchildren.

Jim Plowman, as we have heard today, had a very accomplished parliamentary career, and he was also a very fine gentleman. He served in this place for two separate terms, and he served as Speaker for two terms. He also served as a minister of the Crown and as a shadow minister. He had a very varied and interesting life. Born in Frankston, he was an executive cadet with a civil engineering firm, he worked in New Guinea, he worked as a jackaroo and he was the manager of former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's property at Nareen, which is interesting. I believe that is where he got the political bug, as they say. He became involved in the

Liberal Party in Benalla and Yea and then moved to Evelyn.

I knew Jim when I was a new member of Parliament in 1996. I am one of two Liberal members from that time who remain in this place, the other being my colleague the member for Nepean. Jim was a very impartial Speaker, but I think he also brought enormous dignity to the role. He certainly maintained the traditions in terms of the Speaker's dress.

He had a unique way of dealing with the unruly behaviour that sometimes occurs in this place. The particular occasion that I remember was the one on which my husband came to sit in the gallery for the first time to see what his wife actually got up to. On this occasion the chamber was particularly unruly. Instead of requesting various members to leave as they misbehaved, when Speaker Plowman finally lost his patience he himself stood up, left the chair and went and sat in his chambers — and some members obviously remember that time. An enormous hush fell over this place as we all realised that we had been left without a Speaker. We said to ourselves, 'What should we do?'. He waited in his chambers for some minutes before he finally returned. As you can imagine, that hush continued, because we were all in shock at what had occurred.

That is an example of the unusual nature of the man and the very calm way he dealt with what went on in this place. We remember him very fondly. He was a gentleman, and he was a very composed person whose decisions in this place were, I believe, impartial and fair. I offer my sympathies to his family. He is sadly missed.

Motion agreed to in silence, honourable members showing unanimous agreement by standing in their places.

Adjournment

Mr BRACKS (Premier) — I move:

That, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honourable Sidney James Plowman, the house now adjourns until 8.00 p.m. today.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned 3.19 p.m.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 8.02 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr BATCHELOR (Minister for Victorian Communities) — In light of the very tragic accident today, where a truck ran into the side of a train in Kerang and a large number of fatalities and injuries occurred as a result, the Premier, the Minister for Public Transport, the shadow Minister for Public Transport and the member for Swan Hill are not able to be in attendance at Parliament tonight.

Out of the concern of the Parliament for the tragic and unprecedented deaths and the injuries that have occurred on our road network and public transport network, I will shortly be recommending to the house that we adjourn as a mark of respect and an acknowledgement of the seriousness with which the Parliament views the events that have taken place today. They are tragic events, and we are all very concerned.

The motion that I will move shortly has the support of all sides of this chamber and the support of the Independent. It is really an expression of sympathy and grief for the families who have lost loved ones in this accident on our train network and is out of respect for those who have been injured so badly in Kerang today.

Mr BAILLIEU (Leader of the Opposition) — On behalf of the members of the Liberal Party I also extend my condolences to those families who have lost loved ones. Our prayers and thoughts are with those who are in this situation, fighting for their lives, and with their families, who are clearly grieving. Our concerns are for those who are dealing with this desperate tragedy.

As the Leader of the House said, a number of people have died and a number of people are critically injured, and a number of people, as I understand it, are still missing. We respect the decision that is being made here. The deliberations of this house would pale into insignificance in light of these circumstances. While this may well be an unprecedented measure, we respect that view and will support the motion that the Leader of the House will be putting to the house. As I understand it, the other house will be doing likewise.

As I said, our thoughts and our prayers are with those who are dealing with this tragic incident and with those who have been so dramatically affected by it. We wish everybody concerned all the best in their endeavours, and we will be supporting the motion to be moved by the Leader of the House.

Mr RYAN (Leader of The Nationals) — The Nationals support the proposed course of action. This

chamber reflects the lives of Victorians, and it should reflect their lives when tragedies befall them. Our prayers and thoughts are with all those who have been affected by this terrible tragedy.

Mr BATCHELOR (Minister for Victorian Communities) — I move:

That the house do now adjourn.

The SPEAKER — Order! The house is now adjourned.

House adjourned 8.06 p.m.