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Tim Fischer – The Promise of Personalised Representation

***Rationale***

The focus for my research paper is the early State Parliamentary career of Tim Fischer, who is most famous for his time as leader of the National Party and Deputy Prime Minister. My reason for choosing to research Tim Fischer stemmed from a simple memory of meeting him as a young girl, whilst at Parliament House on a school excursion. I remembered Mr. Fischer as being amiable and keen to meet a group of country school students, and this lasting memory gave me an interest in discovering more about his beginnings and his path to the heights of Australian politics. Through my reading, I discovered that Fischer campaigned on ‘personalised representation’ in his first election campaign, and I decided to structure my paper around this idea, and whether Fischer lived up to his promise in his first State term. The following report intends to answer that question.

***Methodology***

The following paper will focus on the first term in Fischer’s career, 1971-73, considering the budding young politician and examining for the early signs of the successful and respected politician to come. By addressing the correspondence both sent and received by the popular politician, I aim to determine whether Fischer did, in fact, live up to the hefty promise of ‘personalised representation’. Or whether, like many politicians, he gave into the lure of grandiose ideals and higher callings when actually placed in the seat of Sturt by the electorate he chose to represent. Originally, I planned to do a longitudinal study of the correspondence received by Fischer, in order to ascertain and review whether he was in touch with the constituents throughout his entire political career, and to consider whether his actions and policies were actually aligned with the needs and wishes of his constituents. However, this soon proved to be a far too expansive topic, with the amount of correspondence being overwhelming. I eventually chose to focus on the State Parliamentary career of Fischer, as this an area that has received little attention. I further narrowed my focus, choosing to look at Fischer’s first term as a State parliamentarian, as the member for Sturt. The period from 1971-1973 provided an abundance of documents for me to sort through and examine, and proved to be a good indication of how ‘in touch’ with the community and the electorate Fischer really was. When Tim Fischer announced his intention to run for the new seat of Sturt as the member for the Country Party, his main promise to the people was that he would provide ‘personalised representation.’ (Daily Advertiser, 12/2/1971, p. 11) In his advertisements for this campaign, there were no grandiose ideas or attempts at persuading constituents of anything other than Fischer would represent them on a personalised basis. It is this seemingly simple promise that my paper will be focussing on in terms of Fischer’s first term in State Parliament.

***Tim Fischer: 1971 – 1973***

When the name ‘Tim Fischer’ is mentioned in lounge rooms or at barbeques around New South Wales, the first thing that most people think about is *that* hat - the Akubra that became iconic and that most people from New South Wales have come to associate with the amiable politician from the bush. Fischer has always had strong roots in rural Australia, and these bonds have survived the test of time, relocation and an extremely busy political schedule. Even now, as Fischer prepares to relocate overseas in order to fulfil his new role as the Australian Ambassador to the Vatican, his country heritage remains of the utmost importance, with his wife and children planning to continue living in Lockhart, and Tim intending to commute between the two countries to retain his connection to the Australian bush. Fischer is best known for his successful career in Federal politics, where he ascended to the position of Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of the National Party at the pinnacle of his career, and retired at the height of his success to devote time to his family in 1999. However, the well-loved and respected politician began his political career on a much smaller scale, in the early 1970’s, as a State Parliamentarian for the new seat of Sturt.

***The 1971 Campaign for Sturt***

The electorate of Sturt was first made aware of the 23-year-old Fischer’s entrance into politics on the 23rd of January 1971, in an advertisement by Fischer outlining his movements for the next week and his availability in a range of towns throughout the region. The new electorate consisted of the area that enclosed the boundary around Lockhart, Urana, Corowa, Howlong, Culcairn and Narrandera, and Fischer’s home town of Boree Creek was in the middle of this area. In small print at the bottom of the small ad that Fischer placed in the Daily Advertiser (Daily Advertiser, 23/1/1971, p. 6) was the slogan ‘Remember Tim Fischer for Sturt. His action packed life stands him well to capably represent Town and Country alike.’ Country Party member Doug Belbin, who lobbied for Fischer despite many members’ reservations about his youth, nominated him for the candidacy. Belbin wrote, in a letter that was received by 99 members of the Country Party in the Sturt region (Rees, 2001, p. 75), ‘His candidature is not an impulsive response, but one evoked out of an extensive knowledge of politics and the rural situation.’ When speaking to the Boree Creek branch of the Country Party before the election, attempting to become the Country Party candidate, Fischer argued that if elected, he would ‘get around the electorate, be available to this electorate, and be identified with Sturt.’ (Rees, 2001, p. 77) He certainly achieved this throughout the duration of his campaign, touring around the towns in the electorate, and publishing the list of places he would be each week in the Monday edition of the *Daily Advertiser*. His campaign tour had more than 58 stops throughout the four week period, including small towns and settlements such as Collingullie, Grong Grong, Matong and Brocklesby, which may have been overlooked by a politician without the rural understanding of the young Fischer.

The State election was held on February 13th, and Fischer received the highest proportion of primary votes, and held a persuasive majority when the preferences were allocated. The final votes held Fischer at 10 838, with the second runner Mitchell (the candidate for the Labor Party) receiving 6017. (Rees, 2001, p. 85) Fischer’s primary vote tally was 6675, so his primary votes exceeded the combined DLP-Liberal vote, suggesting that Fischer’s promise of commitment to the needs of the rural electorate had been well received in the Sturt region. In being elected to the seat of Sturt, Fischer made history as the youngest member of the State Parliament at the time, as well as being the first Vietnam Veteran to serve in any Australian Parliament. (Daily Advertiser, 15/2/1971, p. 3) His status as a Vietnam Veteran would play a significant part in his development as a politician in his early career, as well as proving to be an issue that he felt quite strongly about. On winning the campaign, Fischer was humble in victory, stating simply for the press that ‘throughout my campaign I always emphasised the fact the Country Party is not a farmer’s party, but a country people’s party.’ (Daily Advertiser, 15/2/1971, p. 3) Fischer clearly understood the needs of the people in the country, and was able to translate that understanding into a convincing win at the polls for such a young, inexperienced politician. In his first month as the Member for Sturt, Fischer showed his support for a range of major issues, including the Lake Mejum Project, the development of a high school in Culcairn and the development of a Technical School in Corowa. (Daily Advertiser, 29/3/1971, p. 7) In addition to these issues, the most prominent task on Fischer’s agenda was to reduce the amount of probate the government could charge on family estates, which was a real concern for country families. Fischer began his political career by working for ‘early implementation of the Country Party election promise’ to reduce probate within three years. (Daily Advertiser, 29/3/1971, p. 7)

***Agricultural and Rural Issues***

Over the span of Fischer’s first term in the State Parliament, he received an overwhelming amount of correspondence from his constituents, with requests for assistance with a plethora of different issues and concerns. Every topic imaginable was broached in these queries, but none more so than issues relating to agriculture. Fischer was inundated with letters concerns all things agricultural, from sick animals, funding for agricultural ventures, land purchasing and the all important wheat quota. From 1971-73, the topic most raised with Fischer was the wheat quota, with numerous individual farmers and sharefarmers alike writing to their local member in the hopes of raising their wheat quota with the Australian Wheat Board. Fischer replied to every single letter, though with few positive outcomes. Throughout the period, Fischer received some interesting requests, which were always treated with the same professionalism and respect as any request that may have seemed more pressing. For instance, Fischer received several requests for assistance with school assignments from high school and university students, and he always complied and assisted when needed. One such student was Mr. R. Lethbridge, who in 1973 had an assignment on Banana Aphids and Bunchy Top Disease, and requested Fischer help him to track down some information on these rural issues. Fischer eagerly provided the requested information, and then agreed to try to find more if he was able after a second request from the student. (CSU Archives, RW 39/1)

All the while Fischer was busily replying to his correspondence demands, he was also busily working to help fulfil the Country Party’s promise to reduce the State probate on family estates by one third. Late in 1971, in one of his first public policy addresses, he addressed the Legislative Assembly regarding the issue. Obviously his work had an impact, as in November 1971 he made a speech to the Lockhart Rural Youth Club announcing that the State probate duty payable on rural family estates had been reduced by up to 30%. In the speech, he went on to say that in his nine months has the Member for Sturt many Probate induced problems of rural families had crossed his desk. (CSU Archives, RW 39/89) Fischer continued, stating that ‘these reductions are a tremendous breakthrough in providing relief and are part of the policy to carry out progressive reductions of State Probate until it is abolished.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/89) The reduction of probate on family estates was one of the focus areas for Fischer in his first term, and the achievement of such an important goal epitomises the focus that Fischer dedicated to his career in politics, even at such an early stage.

***Educational Issues***

Given Fischer’s relative youth when he entered the State Parliament, it is understandable that education was one of the issues in which he had some interest. However he did not always favour education over other concerns, as he believed that the funding given to education was at times disproportionate to other areas, such as health. (CSU Archives, Press Release 4/12/71, RW 39/89) Similarly to the agricultural field, a significant amount of correspondence was received and sent by Fischer in his first term relating to educational concerns. The difference between these letters and those relating to agriculture was the range of people attempting to gain assistance from the young politician, including parents, students, teachers, school P & C Committees, local business people, and the list goes on. However, as was the case with the letters regarding agricultural issues, Fischer took every concern as seriously as the next, and replied and acted on every letter received. Many letters were from schools requesting new toilet blocks, septic systems and new buildings to cater for increased student populations, and the vast majority of these requests were approved after Fischer advocated for the schools to the Minister for Education, Mr. Charles Cutler. The considerable funding provided for educational purposes by the government is clear on reading the amount of new construction and building improvements being done just in the Sturt electorate from 1971-73.

Issues that were raised included enquiries about scripture in schools (of which Fischer was a strong supporter), the new high school being planned for Culcairn and the acquisition of land for the building, education for special needs children and issues regarding teaching conditions and class sizes. Sex education in schools was a particularly controversial issue in the Sturt electorate in the early ‘70s, with Fischer receiving many letters both for and against the introduction on sex education in schools. Early in 1972, he received over 50 letters complaining about the distribution of a pamphlet to girls in high school, called ‘*What Every Woman Should Know.*’(CSU Archives, RW 39/37) The pamphlet contained what today would be considered as essential health information for young women, such as facts about conception and contraception, as well as information about STDs and how to contact Family Planning services in Australia. The electorate strongly opposed the content of the pamphlet, particularly as it contained no moral or value education. Fischer received letters expressing ‘horror’ and ‘alarm’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/37) at the pamphlet, and he expressed his agreement with those in constituency that were opposed to the booklets’ distribution. Fischer himself made his opinion on the matter known at The Rock Central School speech night, where he argued that ‘the home environment and not the school environment is the correct place for sex education and, indeed, for the broader aspects of education such as basic discipline, basic manners and the like.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/89) Fischer did not, however, allow his own opinions to stop him from expressing the concerns and opinions of the electorate at the time. Fischer wrote letters to Cutler expressing both supporting and opposing views from his constituents on the issue of sex education, showing that he did represent each individual on the issue, and was not attempting to push his own agenda.

In terms of educational issues, Fischer was able to be of assistance to a significant number of the members of the Sturt electorate, and he was rewarded for his efforts with a large number of letters expressing gratitude and appreciation from the community. Fischer, in one example, was able to be of great assistance to Mr. A. Robb of Corowa in late 1973. Mr. Robb’s daughter had been terminated from her teaching scholarship due an absence for personal reasons. Upon Fischer’s advocacy on her behalf, the scholarship was reinstated, much to the pleasure of the Robb family. Mr. Robb expressed his appreciation to Fischer in the strongest terms, writing ‘We all realise that justice has been done in this case predominantly because of your efforts on her behalf. This note is therefore designed not only to tell you of your success in this regard, but also to thank you sincerely for your interest and help. It is good to know that the individual can still count to those who are representing us in government.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/38)

***Health Concerns***

Another major area of concern for the electorate of Sturt during the 1971-73 period of Fischer’s first term was health and hospitals. During this period, many of the hospitals around the region were in need of repairs and improvements, including the Narrandera and Corowa hospitals. In addition to this, a new Medical Centre had been built at Ardlethan, and it had a range of initial teething problems that required the attention of the newest member of the State Parliament. With similar gusto to that he had applied to the issues associated with agriculture and education, Fischer immersed himself in reading and writing letters for his constituents regarding their health needs.

In addition to assisting members of the Sturt electorate with any issues they had regarding health, hospitals and financial assistance for health related issues, Fischer was a strong advocate for recruiting doctors and nurses to come to rural areas, an issue which is still of vital importance in rural NSW. One such doctor was Dr. Rahna, who relocated from the city to become a rural doctor in Wagga Wagga and surrounding towns. So interested in ensuring the enduring relationship between Dr. Rahna and the Sturt region was Fischer, that when a local member of the community assisted the doctor in removing his car from being bogged beside the highway, Fischer made sure to write to thank and congratulate the man on his fine work. In a letter to Mr. S. G. Pertzel of Wagga Wagga, Fischer wrote ‘it is desired to thank you sincerely for your co-operation and help on Thursday night last in extracting Dr. Rahna’s care from the mud on the Sturt Highway. I am sure that Dr. Rahna particularly appreciated the co-operation extended and indeed you action led to a quick solution to the problem.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/49­) In addition to congratulating Mr. Pertzel, Fischer added that ‘as a fellow motorist who also drives a 1,000 mile plus Holden Monaro, might I extend to you very best wishes for continued safe driving.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/49) It is examples such as this piece of personable correspondence between Fischer and the local constituents of the Sturt electorate that highlight how the young politician was able to develop such a strong rapport with his electorate. Fischer clearly understands how to identify with the local people, and did not hesitate to do so, even if it sometimes altered from the polished and proper tone that we have come to expect from politicians. Fischer was not an ordinary politician; rather, he was an ordinary person from rural NSW, and his personal tone that weaves its way through the correspondence he sent to his constituents highlights this.

***Some Unusual Requests***

In addition to the correspondence that Fischer received regarding the three major issues of agriculture, education and health, he received requests for assistance with a plethora of miscellaneous concerns, some being quite unusual in subject and nature. One issue that caused considerable concern for the electorate of Sturt, and most of rural NSW was the introduction of Daylight Savings. Today, Australian society has become accustomed to the changing of the clocks and the extra sunshine during summer; however in the early 1970s people were not impressed with the change. Fischer was inundated with letters demanding that he have Daylight Savings completely abolished, and while he and the Country Party wholeheartedly agreed that it should be removed, they were obviously unsuccessful in doing so, as most of us still enjoy daylight savings every year without fail.

The most controversial issue during Fischer’s first term was the proposal to extend the abortion laws in Australia to allow a womn to choose to have an abortion without her life being in danger. Members of the Sturt electorate vehemently opposed such a change to the laws, with many stating that the current laws (which allowed abortion only when the mother’s life was at risk) were already too flexible and amoral. Fischer agreed with the majority of his constituents in this case, and wrote a range of letters to Mr. K. M. McCaw (Attorney General) regarding his and his electorate’s opposition.

Some requests received by Fischer were much lighter in tone than those regarding the controversial issues above. One such example came from Mr. N. Lowe in 1973, requesting that Fischer assist him in finding an ‘old-fashioned, cemetery style fence’ to use to adorn his property. Of course, only ‘if time permits’, did Mr. Lowe want Fischer to act on his request. Rather than brush aside such a request, that may have seemed unusual and perhaps out his realm of influence to Fischer at the time, he committed himself to assisting Mr. Lowe with his dilemma, and assured him that he would make enquiries into the matter, which he then went on to do. Whether the fence was able to be acquired remains unknown, as there was no extra follow up correspondence saved by Fischer, however the fact that Fischer made a serious attempt to assist with what may have seemed to be a trivial matter is a prime example of the extra step that the young politician always seemed willing to take to best serve his electorate. Late in 1973, Fischer received another unusual request, though not quite so light hearted in nature. A female constituent wrote to Fischer in the strongest terms, urging him to reintroduce capital punishment in Australia, particularly for men who attack women. In her letter, she suggested that such punishments could include ‘castration and/or whipping.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/5) Although Fischer would have been in his rights to ignore such an inflammatory and controversial letter, he replied politely and sincerely with concerns about the incidences of attacks on women in the region, and promised to ‘enquire about capital punishment’ on her behalf, making no promises about any outcome.

Almost inconceivable in the current educational climate of critical understanding of literature and film, and the importance of accessing a range of literary and artistic devices to become well rounded and knowledgeable members of society, Fischer received several requests for the banning of various books and films whilst he was serving in his first term as the Member for Sturt. One of these books was *The Little Red School Book*, which had found its way into various schools through the Sturt electorate. The book was a subversive reference book that circulated around the world, based on some of Chinese Communist Leader Mao Zedong’s writings, and contained references to sex, drugs and alcohol. It was considered by many to be eroding the morality of Australian society, and was feared that young people would use it as a handbook for juvenile delinquency and anarchy. Fischer received various letters from constituents in 1972 requesting that the book be banned and removed from all school classrooms, to which Fischer replied with strong support. Fischer assured people that the book was not supported by the Department of Education, and that any circulation of the books was contrary to government policy, and would be promptly dealt with.

Similarly, in 1973 Fischer was inundated with letters regarding the film *Last Tango in Paris*, with a considerable number of people requesting that Fischer work towards having the film banned from being screened in Australia any further. The film was directed by Italian Bernardo Bertolucci, and starred Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider in the lead roles. The film basically tells the story of an American widower who has a sexual affair with a younger Parisian woman. The film comes with an R-rating, for nudity, violence and some coarse language. The film was complained about by many members of the electorate, being described an example of ‘dangerously corrosive permissiveness’, ‘an abhorrence’, and a film that ‘plumbs the depths of sexual degradation in the name of entertainment.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/11) Constituents called for the banning of the film on the grounds of morality and decency, and although Fischer did not approve of the film, comparing it to ‘the distribution of hard core pornography’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/11), he explained that he had no power to effect such a change, as it was a federal rather than state issue, and the Australian Labor Party were the ones to consider responsible for the distribution of the film.

***Strong Opinions and Ideas***

In addition to the extensive range of issues that Fischer was required to tend to from the local electorate, he was also very busy in his first term making speeches and appearing at local functions, often advocating for issues that were particularly close to his heart, or that he felt were of vital importance for rural society. One such speech was made to the Corowa branch of the Young Australian Country Party (YACP) meeting in October 1971, where Fischer advocated strongly about the necessity of computer knowledge for the future. Obviously ahead of his time in this respect, he attempted to convince his audience of the importance of computers, as well as educating them in terms they could understand about the basic mechanics of the computer, explaining that ‘the newest computes only have cycle times of approximately one nanosecond. A cycle time of a computer is something equivalent to revs per minute in a normal tractor.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/89) This is just one example of the way that Fischer used language and rural rhetoric in order to connect with his electorate, and is probably one of reason for his success in rural politics for the best part of three decades.

Another issue that was very close to Fischer’s heart was the war in Vietnam, about which he spoke on several occasions. As the first parliamentarian in Australia to be elected after having personally served in the controversial and divisive war, Fischer was not shy about making his opinions known. Although he fell short of discussing whether he supported or opposed the war itself, Fischer was vehement in his support for the serving soldiers, and was extremely critical of the Federal government on several occasions in what he considered their ‘insidious attitude’ and ‘back-stabbing’ of the soldiers who were sent to fight. (CSU Archives, RW 39/89) At the Anzac Day service in Lockhart in 1971, Fischer made a speech regarding the development of ‘Vietnam Veteran Victimisation’ in Australian society, warning the community that society must not blame the returned servicemen for the decisions of the government. Fischer has become known for his amiable and calm disposition in politics over the three decades that he has been involved in State and Federal politics, but in his speeches and letters about issues relating to Vietnam, the young Fischer shows a fiery side, with clear passion showing through his words and measured statements.

Fischer was also strongly passionate about the plight of what was called at the time ‘the rising generation’, of which Fischer (at 24 years old) was considered a member. Fischer strongly defended the youth of Australia on several occasions, both in the community and to the NSW Legislative Assembly and NSW Parliament. He argued to the NSW Parliament in 1971, ‘I strongly defend the rising generation of today, that is, those in their teens or twenties, as being one which is collectively no worse, and probably better than any previous generation. I defend these young men and women, not because I am 25 years of age, but because I believe a small group of professional dissenters has become accepted as being a true sample of the entire generation.’ (CSU Archives, 39/89) Similar to the debate going on in society today about the degradation of youth culture, Fischer argued strongly against the stereotyping of youth and pointed out on several occasions that those who caused trouble were in a small minority, and should not be considered as an example of the entire generation.

Despite being a young politician in his first term in the State Parliament, Fischer was interested in the process of politics and keen to have an impact on both the electorate he was serving, and the Country Party that he represented. In December 1971 Fischer sent a memo to Mr. L.A. Punch, who was a fellow member of the Country Party (and would later become the leader of the party), with a range of suggestions for consideration by the Country Party Agenda Committee for the next meeting. The main concern that Fischer expressed was the importance of improving relations between the Country Party and the media. He suggested the introduction an annual ‘one-day press briefing’ for the journalists who were unfamiliar with the issues of country life. He even suggested a possible agenda for such a day, which would include: ‘a one day visit to Taree, with a visit to a decentralised industry in the morning, with a Barbeque and beer, then an inspection of a modern progressive dairy farm in the afternoon.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/89) Fischer’s country roots show through very clearly in his memo to Punch, and the importance he placed on rural relations with the media becomes clear also. Fischer became well known for his affinity with the media, and it is clear here that he was able to see the advantages of a positive relationship with the press from a very early stage in his career, and had already begun thinking about the best way to showcase the positive aspects of rural life.

In addition to advocating strongly for rural life, Fischer also placed a strong emphasis on traditionally conservative rural value in the early stages of his career, with his Catholic background having an obvious impact on many of his value statements. In January 1972, Fischer made a strong statement opposing the widespread use of pornography by Australians, citing the dangerous effects this material has on society and the community. ‘I am not narrow-minded or puritanical, but I recognise that wide-spread hard core pornography is of absolutely no benefit to adolescents or adults, because it merely promotes the degradation of family life. The alternative, in having open slather pornography, is to destroy the very attitude of the community towards the family unit which, after all, is the basic protective unit and the very strength of our society,’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/89) was the statement made by the young Fischer to the press, which created quite a stir within his electorate. After making the comments, Fischer was inundated with letters of congratulations and support for his outspoken attitude and for protecting the morality of rural NSW. (CSU Archives, RW 39/11) He also made statements to the Farrer branch of the YACP in Wagga two weeks later regarding his opposition to loosening of drug laws, which again ensured considerable congratulations from the electorate. Thus, while in contemporary Australian society and the age of the internet and almost unlimited personal freedoms these attitudes may seem a little conservative, Fischer was well in tune with his electorate on major issues regarding social and moral values.

***Conclusion***

Tim Fischer campaigned on the basis of ‘personalised representation’ in his endeavour to represent the electorate of Sturt for the 1971-73 term of State Parliament, and it is clear from the above outline of just a small portion of the correspondence and work done by Fischer that he well and truly delivered on his promise. Whether the issue was as important as the improvement of health infrastructure or as seemingly insignificant as helping a constituent with a school assignment, Fischer treated every letter with an equal amount of importance and respect, and endeavoured to achieve positive outcomes for every member of the electorate that needed his assistance. In January 1973, Fischer sent out letters to the members in his electorate, asking them to nominate him for a second term in the coming elections. One of those constituents, Mr. D.J. Kerr of Oaklands, replied to this letter, saying ‘I will do my utmost to have you nominated, as I consider you have done a very good job during your first term in Parliament. With the experience you have gained, you will go forward with greater confidence and understanding next time than when you first entered Parliament. I say thanks for what you have done so far, Tim. This is only my personal feelings, but a lot of other people down this way are of the same opinion.’ (CSU Archives, RW 39/21) Fischer connected with the people in his electorate through his hard work and commitment to representing their needs and the needs of rural NSW, and this was clearly displayed when the results of the election were released in November 1973. Fischer received a huge majority of 13012 votes, with the other candidates receiving 5259 and 962 respectively, and 240 votes being informal. This increase in votes for the still young and only a little more experienced Fischer was a big vote of confidence from the constituents of Sturt. Fischer, as always, was humble in victory, merely emphasising that the Country Party received strong support, though conceding that the 18-year old vote favoured the Country Party and himself, as a result of progressive policies and a commitment to youth. (CSU Archives, RW 39/89) Thus, although Fischer was young, inexperienced and relatively new to politics when he first entered the Parliament in 1971, he was the kind of politician that Australians love and remember fondly, as he stayed true to his commitments and promises, and never strayed onto the path of grand purposes and lofty ideals, preferring instead to stick with his rural identity and country roots.

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