

Resolution of Council

15 May 2023

Item 11.10

Vale Labor Senator Bruce Childs

Moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by the Chair (the Lord Mayor) –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) former Senator Bruce Childs was born in Mascot, Sydney, on 23 August 1934 and sadly passed away on 4 May 2023;
- (ii) Bruce was first recognised for his work at a meeting of apprentices, moving a motion against the 1951 ‘horror budget’;
- (iii) this moment was the catalyst for his prominence as an activist, he soon went on to join the Australian Labor Party (ALP), became clerk of the chapel, leading his first strike in 1953 and being elected to the Board of Management representing his Trade Union by 1954;
- (iv) his early political involvement engaged with the political issues of his era, particularly opposing Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War, and supporting the women’s liberation movement, including a greater appreciation of the role of women within the ALP;
- (v) Bruce was elected to and took his seat in the Australian Senate in 1981;
- (vi) Bruce’s principal contribution to Parliament was made through his highly effective service on many committees;
- (vii) within two years of entering the Senate, Bruce Childs was a co-convenor of the left-wing of Labor’s Federal Parliamentary Labor Party and the ALP throughout Australia, retaining that role throughout the period of Hawke and Keating Labor Governments;

- (viii) he was acknowledged as a unifier by his colleagues and by senators from all sides of politics for his “courteous, patient and unpretentious manner, as much as he was for the strength of his beliefs”;
 - (ix) as a Senator, Bruce continued to fight for the rights of working people, campaign for peace, support feminism and demand a greater role for women in politics and public life;
 - (x) as a Parliamentarian and a leader of the Left, Childs was fascinated with finding ways that ‘grassroots democracy in all its diversity can find a voice in the Parliament’, or with ensuring that leaders heard the voices and concerns of his faction, or by perpetually encouraging young people and especially young women to become active in public life;
 - (xi) after leaving the Senate in 1997, Bruce served continuously as president of the Evatt Foundation until 2006; and
 - (xii) Bruce’s fairness, commitment and distinct political legacy will be remembered for generations to come;
- (B) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to Bruce Child’s family to express the City of Sydney Council’s condolences and appreciation for his work and the legacy he has left; and
- (C) all persons attending this meeting of Council observe one minute’s silence to commemorate the life of Bruce Childs and his significant contributions to politics and Parliament.

Carried unanimously.

Note – All Councillors, staff and members of the public present stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect to Bruce Childs.

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