

## Resolution of Council

**19 November 2018**

**Item 3.1**

**Vale Edward Carrington (Ted) Mack**

**File No: S051491**

**Minute by the Lord Mayor**

To Council:

I inform Council of the death of the eminent former Independent Mayor and Parliamentarian, Edward Carrington (Ted) Mack on Tuesday 6 November 2018.

As Elizabeth Farrelly wrote in a recent edition of the Sydney Morning Herald, Ted Mack was one of the "truly admirable Australian politicians ever to walk the planet".

What made Ted "truly admirable" was that he never set out to be a politician, and when he entered politics he was motivated by public service, not the trappings and privileges of office. Along with John Hatton, he provided a model for Independents who acted with integrity and were solely motivated by serving their communities and the public good.

Born in Paddington on 20 December 1933, Ted Mack was educated at Sydney Boys High School and the University of NSW, graduating with a Bachelor of Architecture in 1958. Following his graduation, Ted married a Rural Bank employee, Wendy Loubet, and the couple travelled to Europe, working in London.

After returning to Australia in 1961, with their first born daughter, Jennifer, Ted worked as an architect, with a primary focus on public works and socially useful projects. He supervised the construction of the Port Kembla district hospital, subsequently becoming architect-in-charge of hospital design and construction at the NSW Public Works Department. In 1972, he was appointed as Assistant Chief Architect at the NSW Housing Commission and later established his own practice. He also served on a committee chaired by Dr H.C. Coombs which advised on Aboriginal housing in remote areas of Australia.

Ted and Wendy settled in a modest house in North Sydney, extending it to provide a home for their family, which expanded with the arrival of Geraldine in 1961, Jeffrey in 1962 and Peter in 1963.

North Sydney Council's approval of a 17-storey office block near his home in 1970 ignited his interest in local government, and he successfully sought election to the council in 1974. His only previous political involvement was his participation in the campaign to bring back Jørn Utzon after he was forced to resign as architect for the Sydney Opera House.

Ted was re-elected in 1977 and 1980, and was elected Mayor by the Council in 1980, 1981 and 1982, giving up his architectural practice to carry out the role fulltime. He was re-elected as Mayor by popular vote in 1983 and 1987. In 1987, he received 90 per cent of the vote.

His started his first term as mayor by selling the mayoral Mercedes-Benz car, instead using his own 1951 Citroen at no cost to the ratepayers. Proceeds from the sale helped buy community buses.

His period as Mayor was distinguished by his commitment to open government, transparency and public participation.

All council meetings, committees and council files were open to the public. The public participated in council decision making through the creation of 24 precinct committees, public meetings and referenda. Around 3,000 public meetings and 36 referenda were held during his eight years as mayor.

Ted also ensured the Council was on a strong financial footing, by raising funds from sources other than rates. Over the period 1980 to 1987, rates as a proportion of Council's income dropped from 66 per cent to 38 per cent. In 1987, North Sydney was named as the top Sydney council in an independent financial analysis.

This financial management enabled Council to implement a large public works program without relying on rates or loans. Several new parks were created while others were refurbished. New childcare facilities, a major new community centre and new tennis centres were built. Existing community centres, public swimming pools and North Sydney Oval were renovated and there were major library extensions. Streetscapes were improved with new or improved seats, signs, footpaths, lighting, bus shelters and around 50,000 street trees.

He recommended that all spare council land be used for public housing and introduced North Sydney's first heritage study and conservation plans.

In 1981, he was elected to the NSW Legislative Assembly seat as Member for North Shore, defeating the then Liberal Opposition Leader, Bruce McDonald. He was subsequently re-elected with comfortable majorities in 1984 and 1988. Given North Shore had almost identical boundaries to North Sydney Council, this made him twice as effective serving his local community. During his time as state MP he did not accept the Mayoral allowance.

I was honoured to serve with Ted for several months after I was elected Member for Bligh in March 1988 and honoured that he endorsed me for that election.

Ted resigned from the NSW Parliament on 16 September 1988. Had he remained another two days he would have completed seven years parliamentary service and been eligible for a substantial parliamentary pension.

In March 1990, Ted returned to public life when he was elected to the Australian Parliament as Member for North Sydney, defeating John Spender, the Liberal Opposition's Foreign Affairs spokesperson.

As a Federal MP he opposed Australia's participation in the Gulf War, the sale of Qantas and other privatisations and Sydney Airport's third runway. He continued to advocate for greater transparency and public participation and introduced a private member's bill to provide for citizen initiated referendums based on the Swiss model. He resigned from the Australian Parliament on 29 January 1996, again to avoid being eligible for a parliamentary pension.

The following year he was recognised as one of Australia's one hundred "National Living Treasures", organised by the National Trust of Australia. He continued his involvement in public life, as a speaker and commentator on open government and public participation. He was elected to the 1999 Constitutional Convention on an Australian Republic where he advocated a directly elected Head of State. He was chosen to deliver the 2013 Sir Henry Parkes Oration entitled "The State of the Federation" at Tenterfield. Also in 2013, he wrote an opinion piece for the Sydney Morning Herald opposing an early draft of the NSW Government's draconian Early Intervention Bill, which would have given the government unprecedented powers to suspend Councils.

In March 2017, North Sydney Council celebrated Ted's achievements and contribution to public life, local government, local democracy, architecture and urban planning with the Ted Mack Oration, delivered by Elizabeth Farrelly, appropriately at North Sydney's Independent Theatre. When he arrived to take his seat, the audience gave him a standing ovation.

This was a warm acknowledgement of his significant contribution, not just to North Sydney but the wider Australian community.

He was a beacon for public service, independent representation and democracy. I send my condolences to his wife Wendy and his family.

## **Recommendation**

It is resolved that:

- (A) all persons present in the Chamber stand for one minute's silence to mark the life of Ted Mack and his outstanding contribution to local government, the NSW and Australian Parliaments, independent representation and democracy; and
- (B) a letter, under the Lord Mayor's signature, be conveyed to Mr Mack's wife, Wendy expressing Council's sincere condolences to her and her family.

## **COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE**

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Chair (the Lord Mayor) –

That the minute by the Lord Mayor be endorsed and adopted.

Carried unanimously.

Note – all Councillors, staff, press and members of the public present stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect to Edward Carrington (Ted) Mack.