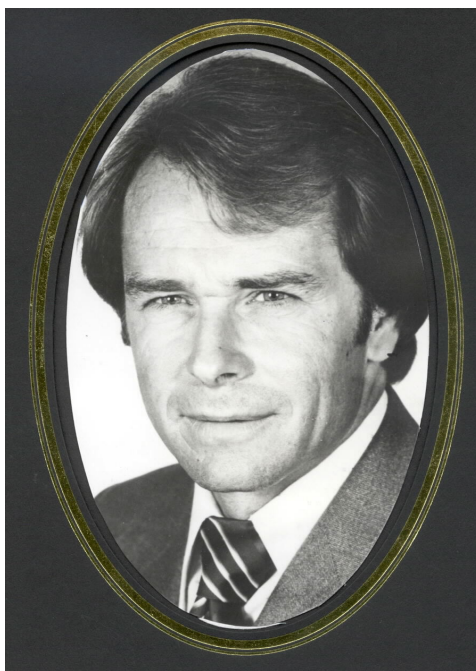




# PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**TOM HERZFELD, MLA**

*Condolence Motion*



**Legislative Assembly**

Wednesday, 16 August 2023

*Reprinted from Hansard*

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## TOM HERZFELD

### *Condolence Motion*

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Deputy Premier)** [12.01 pm] — without notice: On behalf of the Premier and the Parliament, I move —

That this house records its sincere regret at the death of Tom Herzfeld and tenders its deepest sympathy to his family.

This motion is to commemorate the commitment of Tom Herzfeld, who dedicated many years of his life to public service. His contributions left an enduring mark on his community in the Perth hills. Like so many Western Australian success stories, his life started abroad. He was born in Berlin in 1936, in the years leading up to World War II. His family, who were Jewish, left Germany in the tumultuous times of World War II. They found refuge in Thailand, where Tom was privately educated, before eventually settling in Perth in 1948. He embarked on his high school journey at Guildford Grammar School, later earning a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Western Australia. May I say, as the daughter of Italian migrants, I have a quiet respect for and appreciation of the challenges faced and overcome by the Herzfeld family.

From 1959 to 1966, Tom applied his engineering prowess within the WA Public Works Department, with projects spanning the Kimberley, Pilbara, and south west regions. Transitioning to private practice, he worked with notable firms including Mansell and Partners, Thiess Brothers, Bell Brothers and Lumeco. A significant achievement was his leadership in constructing the East Perth rail terminal, a landmark unveiled in 1976. I am sure he would have been interested to see the expansion of that great building taking place today.

Tom's commitment extended beyond engineering. He was also a dedicated community member. He was a founder and board member of the independent Helena School in 1973, highlighting his dedication to local education. His involvement continued as he was elected to the Shire of Mundaring in 1975, ascending to the role of shire president by 1976.

In the state political arena, Tom Herzfeld also emerged as the Liberal candidate for the Mundaring district in 1976. This district encompassed portions of Mundaring shire, Toodyay shire, and the Swan Valley, representing a non-metropolitan constituency with around 8 000 voters. In the 1977 election, he secured victory with a slim margin of 300 votes, capturing 52.2 per cent of the final tally. He served as the Liberal MLA for the Mundaring district until 1983, followed by roles as opposition research officer and state director of the Liberal Party until 1989.

Following politics, he lived an active retirement in Darlington, serving as a national board member of the Australian Shareholders' Association between 2007 and 2011. He was also described as a master stone wall builder and park runner.

On behalf of the government, we extend our condolences to Tom's wife, Sally, in the gallery, and to his three children and to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Our deepest sympathy and condolences to you, the family, and again we recognise his life in public service.

**MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party)** [12.05 pm]: On behalf of the opposition, I would like to add my comments to the condolence motion for Tom Herzfeld. I would also like to acknowledge in the gallery this afternoon Tom's wife, Sally; his daughter, Wendy Hull; and his two sons, Andrew and John Herzfeld.

Tom Herzfeld passed away at the sage of 87. He was the Liberal MLA for the district of Mundaring from 1977 to 1983 and the general secretary and state director of the WA Liberal Party from 1987 to 1989.

Tom was born in Berlin in 1936, the son of a banker and an accountant. The Herzfelds were a Jewish family who escaped Germany and saw out the war years in Thailand. In 1948, they migrated to Perth, where Tom attended Guildford Grammar School and graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Western Australia.

From 1959 to 1966 he worked as a civil engineer with the WA Public Works Department in the Kimberley, the Pilbara and the south west before transferring to private practice. He was a consulting engineer for the construction of the East Perth rail terminal. Within his local hills community, he was a founder and board member of the independent Helena School and was elected to the Shire of Mundaring in 1975. He was shire president from 1976 to 1977.

In 1976 Tom Herzfeld was selected as the Liberal candidate for the seat of Mundaring. Created for the 1974 election, after a further redistribution in 1976, it comprised most of Mundaring shire, Toodyay shire and the Swan Valley. Officially a country seat, with around 8 000 voters, it was held by two-term Labor MLA Jim Moiler. At the 1977 election, Tom won the seat by 300 votes, just over 50 per cent of the final vote. Sir Charles Court's re-elected government won four additional seats in 1977, but Tom Herzfeld was the only Liberal candidate to unseat an incumbent ALP member.

He was a diligent local member and an intelligent debater. He was re-elected in 1980 with an increased 53.5 per cent of the final vote despite an improved statewide ALP vote. In 1983, when the O'Connor government was defeated, Tom suffered a below-average swing of 3.6 per cent but lost Mundaring by 16 preference votes. The Liberal Party successfully challenged the result in the Court of Disputed Returns, but, predictably, the re-election held on 8 October 1983 reconfirmed the Labor win with a further 2.0 per cent swing.

From 1983 until April 1987, Tom Herzfeld was a research officer to opposition leaders Ray O'Connor and Bill Hassell. He was appointed as general secretary of the Liberal Party after the resignation of Chilla Porter and redesignated as state director in 1988. This was an unhappy time for the Liberal Party, with hotly disputed state conference elections and wrangling over a new constitution. The 1989 state election saw the Liberal Party fail to win key marginal seats, despite an overall swing, and Tom resigned later that year. Sadly, Tom after that looked to politics beyond the Liberal Party, standing as the Liberals for Forests candidate in 2001 in Swan Hills.

Tom lived an active retirement in Darlington, serving as a national board member of the Australian Shareholders' Association from 2007 to 2011. He enjoyed over 60 years of marriage with Sally and leaves three children, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. I had the privilege today of meeting Sally and his children, and I heard much about Tom's great respect for Parliament and what he spoke about with his family members. He had a great belief in the Westminster system, and later in life, particularly in the last few days, he reflected on the ability of members of Parliament to have an impact on the lives of many through legislation.

In acknowledging Tom's service to public life, we have much to be grateful for: the significant contributions he clearly made to public life and his strong commitment to the community, which is evident from this condolence motion and the comments we have heard and I personally heard from his family. I extend our deepest sympathies to Sally, Wendy, Andrew and John, and to Tom's grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Vale, Tom Herzfeld.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House)** [12.11 pm]: As Leader of the House, I make a brief but important contribution to acknowledge that, of course, statistically it is a rare privilege to be elected to this place. It is important to acknowledge the passing of any members who have served this place because to reach here is a very significant achievement for many.

I acknowledge the wife of Mr Herzfeld, Sally, who is in the chamber today, and, of course, his children, Wendy, Andrew and John.

We acknowledge that the seat of Mundaring was constituted only from 1974 to 1989. Three members served that constituency as it was constituted: Mr James Moiler from 1974 to 1977, Mr Herzfeld from 1977 to 1983 and Mr Gavan Troy from 1983 to 1989. It is important for all of us to acknowledge the people who put themselves forward to be elected to this place and the contribution they make to our democracy and Parliament. On the sad passing of the family's husband and father, we acknowledge his contribution to Western Australia and to the communities he served in the hills of the Perth metropolitan area.

With that, I also pass on the condolences of the Labor Party of Western Australia to Sally, her family members and friends on the passing of Tom Herzfeld.

Rest in peace.

**MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition)** [12.13 pm]: I rise to the add to the condolence motion for Tom Herzfeld, which has already been spoken to by the Deputy Premier and the Leader of the Liberal Party, who have outlined some of Tom's life story.

I will not go over all that again, but I offer my condolences to Sally and to the family as a member who currently represents some of the electorate that Tom represented. The Shire of Toodyay is now within my electorate, but in those days, there was an electorate known as Mundaring that encompassed Toodyay. As we have heard, the electorate was there for only about 15 years, but Tom represented it for six of those 15 years as one of three people who represented it.

Reading the story of his life, I find it obvious that this was a person who was deeply connected to the community and the local school community. As many people who come to this place do, he served in his local community and in his local government. That commitment to public life was not limited to his commitment to the Parliament.

His was a life that was well lived, and he obviously continued to contribute to the party that he then belonged to before progressing to other interests in public life. He continued to involve himself in a role with the Australian Shareholders' Association.

As Leader of the Nationals WA and inheritor of part of the seat of Mundaring, I offer my condolences to Sally and pay my respects to Tom Herzfeld.

Vale, Tom.

**MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Regional Development)** [12.15 pm]: I will make a very brief contribution. As a very young man, I went to the Shire of Mundaring in 1976 and became an Australian citizen. Tom Herzfeld was the shire president who swore me in. It was a very nervous and anxious transition for me at that time, but he made me feel very comfortable. His signature is on my Australian citizenship certificate, and I have never forgotten that moment. I would like his family to know that he made a great difference to everyday people in the work that he did. Thank you.

Vale, Tom Herzfeld.

**THE SPEAKER:** Members, I request that all members rise for one minute's silence in order to carry the motion.

Question passed; members and officers standing as a mark of respect.

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