



PRESIDENT
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

19 August 2021

Vale Max Willis (1935 – 2021)

It is with great sadness that the NSW Legislative Council honours the passing of the Honourable Max Willis RFD, ED, LLB. Mr Willis was a member of our Council for some 28 years between 1970 and 1999, serving as President between 1991 and 1998.

As the Council's 17th President, Mr Willis will be remembered for the significant contribution he made in asserting and enhancing the effectiveness of the Legislative Council as a House of Review – particularly as a party in the proceedings in *Egan v Willis*. Importantly, this case before the High Court of Australia confirmed the rights of the Council to order the production of papers from the executive government. Mr Willis reflected on these significant events in 2016 as part of the Legislative Council's [Oral History Project](#).

Before becoming President, Mr Willis was a driving force behind the establishment of the robust committee system that we have today, and the first Chair of the Social Issues Committee. The significant contribution of Mr Willis as Chair of that committee's inquiry into access to adoption information, and his passionate advocacy for the committee system as a whole, is also detailed in a 2013 interview from earlier chapters of the Legislative Council's Oral History Project, including in the [video recording available here](#).

Likewise, Mr Willis left a lasting legacy as a strong proponent of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, and was instrumental in forging strong bonds between the NSW Parliament and the National Parliament of Solomon Islands – prompting a twinning partnership that continues today.

Outside of his work with the Council, Mr Willis was a solicitor. He served in the Vietnam War, and for 33 years was an active member of the Army Reserve, with his awards including the Reserve Force Decoration, the Efficiency Decoration and the Cross of Solomon Islands.

On behalf of members of the Legislative Council, I extend my condolences to Mr Willis' family at this sad time. He will be greatly missed.

Matthew Mason-Cox MLC

22nd President of the NSW Legislative Council