

The Melloy family – a Labor dynasty

Jack Melloy, who died in January aged 97, was one of the great patriarchs of Queensland Labor.

Jack Melloy was Deputy Leader of the State Opposition to Opposition Leader Tom Burns from 1974 to 1975 when Labor was reduced to 11 MPs.

Tom said Bjelke-Petersen gave the Opposition nothing, starving them of funds. So he depended on Jack.

“He was a straight-talking, straight-shooting sort of man who would never let you down.

“Jack believed Bjelke-Petersen was sowing the seeds of future disaster by underfunding the hospital system.

“You clearly knew where you stood with Jack. He was a great family man and a great Labor man,” Tom said.

Jack's family background

Born in 1908, Jack joined the ALP at 14. His father had been in the merchant navy and active in the Seamen's Union.

A dental technician by profession, Jack was active in the union and went on to become an organiser and advocate for the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union in 1951-1952.

He ran twice for the federal seat of Lilley in the 1950s. In 1960 he ran for, and won, the state seat of Nudgee which he held until retirement in 1977.

Winning Lilley was an ambition later fulfilled by his daughter, Elaine Darling, in 1980. She was the first Queensland woman to be elected to the House of Representatives.

Elaine remembers handing out Labor how-to-vote cards as a child at Junction Park State school.

“In the house, we'd have a blackboard up, tallying the votes at all the booths.

“And there was lots of conversation



JACK MELLOY - 1908-2006

about current affairs at the dinner table. We were very strong on social policy and looking after low-income people,” she said.

Elaine was member for Lilley until 1993. She also served a term on the Caloundra City Council from 2000-2004.

Elaine was the eldest daughter of Jack's seven children and most have been politically active to some degree. Her sisters Lynette and Noela have both contested seats for Labor.

Jack leaves about 50 grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Granddaughter, Liz Pommer, is an active Party member on the Gold Coast. In 1998 Liz ran for the State seat of Warrego and the Federal seat of Maranoa.

She also remembers letterboxing and handing out how-to-vote cards as a child.

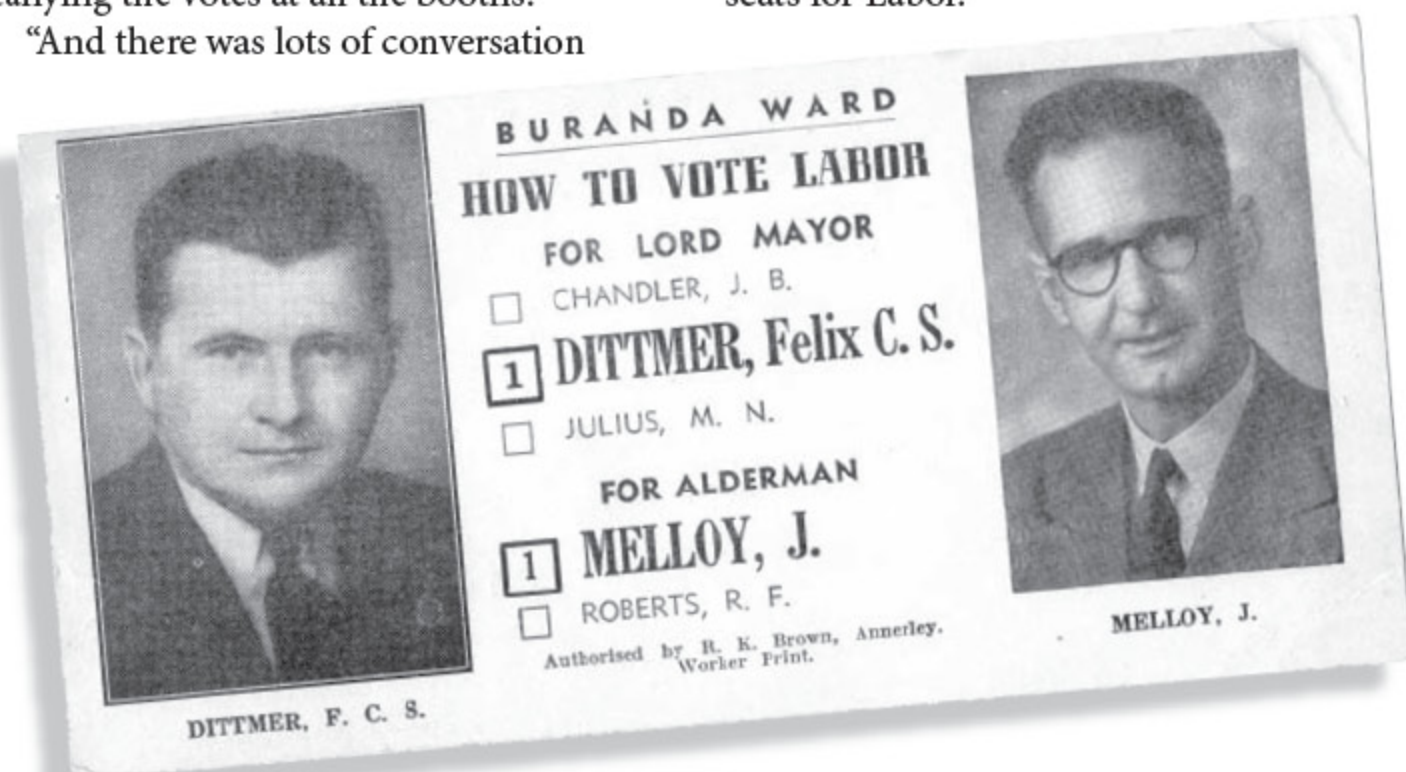
“It wasn't overtly political. It was just what we did,” Liz said.

For Jack's eulogy, his son John wrote:

“His ambition was not raw personal ambition, set on mere personal gain. He came from the great tradition of people acting collectively to improve the lives of the have-nots through the electoral system.

“It was because of this idealism that he became known as a man, and later a politician, of integrity who was interested in improving society and not milking the system for his own benefit.

“Perhaps his greatest achievement was managing the fine balance between public and private life.”



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