



Vale Bryce Gaudry

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Bryce Gaudry, one of those rare politicians who put the public before personal interests, passed away on October 5.

A country boy, teacher, unionist, activist, loving husband and father, Gaudry joined the Australian Labor Party in Newcastle in 1980. An accidental set of circumstances led to him being preselected as Labor's candidate for the state seat of Newcastle and winning it from a conservative independent in 1991.

Gaudry sustained a strong community focus as the local MLA. He was willing to chair and attend Latin America solidarity meetings and speak at anti-war rallies. The strength of his convictions led him to blow the whistle on the Labor government's plans to sell off the publicly-owned electricity system in the mid-90s. The ensuing uproar forced then-NSW premier Bob Carr to back down.

Gaudry's steadfast support for the rail line into Newcastle led to another falling out with the party machine. In 2006, NSW Labor head office dis-endorsed Gaudry and parachuted local businessperson Jody Mackay as the local candidate. In response, 130 members of the Newcastle Labor branch resigned or were expelled for supporting Gaudry. Gaudry subsequently ran as an independent in the 2007 state election and won an impressive 21% of the vote. Mackay went on to lose the seat in 2011, Newcastle lost its rail line and that state's electricity was ultimately privatised.

During his three-year struggle with pancreatic cancer, Gaudry continued to fight. His final battles were for better palliative care services and legalising marijuana for medical use.

Four hundred mourners attended his funeral in Newcastle City Hall on October 10.

Source: <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/vale-bryce-gaudry>