

# David Hamill – life after politics

In 1989, he helped Wayne Goss usher in the first Labor government in 33 years and went on to oversee transport, education and the state treasury.

David Hamill has ditched his trademark moustache, picked up a doctorate and joined the Order of Australia. *Your Time* catches up with the former politician turned company director.

**You were Queensland Parliament's member for Ipswich for 18 years from ages 26 to 43, nine of those as a minister with the Goss and Beattie Labor Governments. Why did you retire?** I always wanted to get out of Parliament while I was still young with time for another career. I'd seen some people stay there a very, very long time who came out bitter and twisted. I didn't want that.

**How did you adjust to life on the outside?** For me, getting out was on my terms. It's different when people get defeated in their seat. I didn't have the grieving often associated with that. I did miss my staff though. There's a camaraderie that comes from banding together to face the common foe.

**Since leaving politics life does not appear to have slowed down. Your signature block is less a job title than a**



**rap sheet. How do all those roles translate into a weekly schedule?** No week is quite like another. I've just concluded a nine-year term as Chairman of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service. I have a number of company commitments and I've just flown in from a meeting in New York. I also chair the board at Gladstone airport so head up there once a month.

**Is it just about being busy?** No, I quite enjoy it. I didn't want to simply immerse myself in corporate life. I wanted to keep community and charitable activities going. I've done that through my work with the Red

Cross and a stint on the University of Queensland Senate. I also chaired the Queensland Museum board for a while.

**Does that schedule leave time for any hobbies?** One of my simple joys is my garden. I'm allowed to do certain menial tasks when it comes to the roses, shovelling the poo and so on. And the hedging, the edging and the mowing are my domain. I'm also learning Spanish. My daughter-in-law is from Buenos Aires and I told her I hope my grandchildren will be bilingual, so I thought I should put my money where my mouth is.

**You were pulled back into the limelight to manage flood relief for the Bligh Government in 2011. How did you find that?** It was a challenging time. We never really knew how much money we had to distribute or how many people were affected. We were constantly redoing the maths. I think we achieved what we set out to do which was not sit on a pile of money. We ended up distributing more than \$280 million over nine months.

**You left politics before social media**

**became a force. Do you think you might have saved some shoe leather if you'd been on Twitter in the 1980s?**

Social media has some concerns for me. There's no filter on what goes up and all sorts of outrageous stuff swirls around. It's also accelerated the news cycle and heightened people's expectations.

I think for government it's taking away some of the thinking time. The issues of today are complicated and they need to be thought through, not just get a seat-of-the-pants, immediate reaction.

**You are a Rhodes Scholar and completed a PhD after politics. Is there anything you have difficulty learning?** I'm having fun with my Spanish verbs – the irregular ones.

**You still call Ipswich home. Why?** My mum lives nearby. She's in her late 80s. Also, I grew up and went to school here. My family's been here for six generations so this is really home.

**What's your next big challenge?** Grandchildren. We're at the beginning of a run and I'm looking forward to it.

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