

6.1. MM01: Vale - Dr Harry Nespolon

I would like to share a tribute to the esteemed Dr Harry Nespolon, a much-loved General Practitioner at Neutral Bay Medical Practice, who passed away following a short battle with pancreatic cancer late last month.

As I study the catalogue of Dr Nespolon's career highlights, I am impressed by the sheer scale of his talents and achievements. But mostly, I feel a sense of incredible thankfulness and gratitude that so many people in our community were lucky enough to call him their Doctor. What an honour and a privilege to have one of the world's best serving the people of North Sydney.

Originally from Adelaide, Dr Nespolon graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery from Flinders University in South Australia in 1985, then went on to obtain his Diploma of Obstetrics from the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. He established his first practice, Neutral Bay Medical Practice, in 2003, followed by CBD Medical Practice, practising at both. Not only was he a popular local GP, but an inaugural member and former Chair of the Sydney North Health Network Board and Board member of Northern Sydney Local Health District.

Although his presence was greatly treasured here in North Sydney, his influence was also felt keenly across the nation as President of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. In this role, he worked tirelessly to advocate on behalf of Australian GPs and the General Practice profession to ensure Australia's primary health clinicians can offer patients the best possible care.

Despite his illness, he toiled assiduously with the Federal Government to lay out its \$2.4 billion health package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to establish one of the three GP-led respiratory clinics operating in northern Sydney. I believe he introduced Telehealth, a service to his patients which will continue beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic.

From personal experience I would like to share that "Harry", as he liked to be called, was a Doctor who developed an instant rapport with his patients. No pretence, no formality, just *"please call me Harry, how can I help you today?"*.

Those who knew him best have said his death is a terrible loss for GPs and described him as:

- an inspiring, effective leader;
- always clever, caring and dedicated;
- a very decent and good person;
- someone with a huge amount of energy and drive;
- a GP without peer; and
- a great leader in one of the most challenging times to all Australians.

I was particularly struck by this memorial from one of his patients:

"When I saw him early this year and he didn't look well, I asked him what was wrong with him and he was very up front about his condition, which we both knew would have a poor prognosis,

but he didn't want any sympathy. His only interest was in my health... "More importantly what's wrong with you...."

In a tribute to Dr Nespolon, the Federal Member for North Sydney, Mr Trent Zimmerman MP, has said: *"He was a tireless advocate for his fellow GPs and a passionate Doctor."*

In Parliament, State Member for North Shore, Ms Felicity Wilson MP, paid tribute to Dr Nespolon and said: *"He was a warm, kind, compassionate man, and I extend my condolences to his family, friends and colleagues."*

Dr Nespolon is survived by his partner Lindy Van Camp and daughters Hannah and Ella and our sympathy goes to them as they mourn his loss. Many of our residents will also be feeling the loss of their beloved GP. It is truly a sad day when we farewell one of the finest members of our community and I know the Council stands united in sadness with you.

I therefore recommend:

1. THAT Council write to Dr Harry Nespolon's family to convey our sympathy for their loss, incorporating a copy of this Minute.

**COUNCILLOR JILLY GIBSON
MAYOR**