



Speech By
Peter Russo

MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK

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ADJOURNMENT

Russo, Mrs M

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (10.43 pm): I rise in the House tonight to speak about my mum, Maureen Russo. Mum passed away on 6 August, aged 87. Mum did not want a eulogy, so it took some convincing that a eulogy was not really about her but about all her good deeds and the great things she had done during her life. Mum did not like a fuss. She especially did not like a fuss if the fuss was about her. She did not like injustice, and I think I may have inherited some of that from her.

A couple of days before she passed I was having a chat to her. Mum's conversations always went along the lines of, 'Peter, you need to do something about this.' One of the things she wanted me to do something about was the poor souls on Manus Island. I do not think Mum quite understood how the political process works and how powerless a backbencher in the Labor Party is at times.

Mum probably came into politics late in her life. However, she participated in the elections. She lived at the Holy Cross Hostel. Just down the road from the Holy Cross Hostel was the Holy Cross School. Mum handed out how-to-vote cards on at least two occasions in a state election and in at least one federal election. On one particular occasion Mum was very active in the hostel and she was very concerned that the Labor Party had fallen down on its job and had not provided the home with the appropriate material for the postal votes. Mum got on the phone to me, gave me a blast and then I rang the party office and got it organised. She did not like the conservatives getting the jump on us.

Mum had an unquenchable thirst for news. She used to spend a large amount of her day cutting out newspaper stories which she would distribute to all of her five children. Those cuttings ranged from social issues that she thought we should take note of to aspects about life that she thought we were missing out on. As she moved towards the end of her days, she started giving me pieces out of the *Catholic Leader* in relation to the plight of the Pacific Islanders and climate change. Right up until the very end Mum was very active. We were very lucky that she was able to be lucid right to the end.