



Speech By  
**Joseph Kelly**


**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

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Record of Proceedings, 27 March 2019

## ADJORNMENT

### Bermingham, Ms C

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (7.09 pm): I join the Deputy Premier in saying a few words in memory of Catherine Bermingham. I acknowledge Catherine's husband, Ron, who is in the gallery, along with other family members and friends. I pass on my condolences and those of my family, her co-workers, many of our branch members and local community members.

Like a lot of good political friendships, ours began with a verbal joust across a room. Catherine was the councillor for East Brisbane and attended every branch meeting when I was first involved in the Labor Party. She kept branch members informed and was not afraid of a robust debate. Catherine had a wicked sense of humour, and any debate with her was always enjoyable and enlightening—and we had many of them!

As I left my house this morning I saw the road safety measures that were put in place near our local school by Catherine many years ago. When I told her about my concerns about road safety at the local school she came out straightaway, had a look at the problem and came back with a solution. She worked hard to get funding for the measures to improve safety. We are still benefiting from her work all these years later.

As I stepped out of my door this morning I was reminded of one of my other early interactions with Catherine. Coming home from the hospital following the slightly difficult birth of our eldest daughter and an extended stay in the special care nursery, we found a present on our doorstep from Catherine. It was the very first present our daughter received. That says a lot about the sort of person Catherine was.

Catherine was a hard worker. She always arrived at my office first. In fact, for a few weeks I tried to beat her in. I would set my alarm, get up early and get organised. I would get to the office early, thinking, 'This is the day. I'm going to get there.' I can advise the House that she always beat me in to the office and she worked hard all day long. She was well loved by the people in our community. When she started in my office she had been out of the council for 10 years, but there was a constant stream of people coming to see Catherine.

Catherine was born in humble circumstances. She was a St Ursula's Toowoomba girl. She was committed to building a fairer society and held her Labor values dear. She knew that for Jim Soorley or any other leader to stand and implement Labor policy an army of very average people had to stand next to signs on corners, fill letterboxes, raise money, lead community debates and knock on doors—and she never shied away from these tasks, even after leaving office as a councillor. She continued to support the Labor Party wherever she was living. She was a true believer and was deeply respected in the Labor Party and across political lines. The attendance at her funeral of Kevin Rudd, Jim Soorley and a host of other Labor Party members, including people from this House and former council colleagues from all parties, reinforced for me the high regard in which she was held.

My wife and I visited Catherine and Ron last year in Toowoomba. She showed me her lovely garden and her art studio full of amazing work. I spoke to Catherine by chance the day before her unexpected passing. We discussed art, gardening and of course politics. She was helping with campaigns right until the end.

Catherine knew what was important in life and she committed herself to these things totally. Family was her No. 1 priority. I am so pleased to have some of her children and grandchildren still living in my electorate. She loved art and she loved gardening, but she loved politics—not for the power but for the capacity it has to improve our society. Vale, Catherine Bermingham.