



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2020

### **MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

#### **Mulherin, Hon. TS**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (3.08 pm): I join many others in the House in supporting this condolence motion. I have been thinking about what I want to say. Many people have said some wonderful things about Tim Mulherin and they are well deserved. Tim truly was a wonderful representative of Mackay in this House. While listening to others speak, I have been thinking about what I could say that is a bit different. I can only speak from personal experience, knowing Tim as I did.

I knew Tim for around 30 years. I got to know him really well when he became state organiser in 1993. From the minute I got to know him, I started to love him. He was someone you would listen to. To say that he had an incredible amount of knowledge is an understatement, as we have all said in this House before. When I met Tim, the first thing that came to mind was, 'This is someone who is the salt of the earth.' Every time I think about someone being the salt of the earth Tim Mulherin comes to mind because it is such a good description of him.

Tim and I had extremely different upbringings. Tim came from regional Queensland. He was raised and lived all his life in Mackay. I am a first generation Australian, the child of Italian migrants, and was raised in the inner city of Brisbane where I have lived all my life. Even though we had very different upbringings, we shared common values and a common view of what it meant to be a member of the ALP and a family person. That is what drew us together. To say that I loved him is an understatement. He was truly a great friend and he will be greatly missed.

Tim came from generations of Australians. I think his great-grandparents migrated from Ireland in the early 1880s. His family has an incredible history here in Australia. He had a passion for the sugar industry—something that I know his family was involved in and that he supported all his life.

Tim followed in the footsteps of the great Ed Casey. A lot of Tim's first speech was a tribute to Ed. He said that one thing they both shared in the direction of their lives was family, faith and friends. He talked very warmly about Ed and what he had given him during his time.

After Tim was elected to this House—I had the pleasure of being in the House at the same time as Tim—he had a long and distinguished career. It is very true that there are senior public servants in what is now the agriculture and fisheries department—it was then the department of primary industries—who remember and still talk very fondly of Tim. If you can attain that position where people remember and talk about what a great minister you were, you can be very proud of your life. Tim's family should be very proud of the manner in which he was spoken about, not only in this House but also in the Public Service.

Someone mentioned stepping up in times of adversity. As deputy opposition leader, Tim supported the now Premier and other members of this House. The true calibre of a person can be measured when they step up in adversity. Tim had a calm disposition and the ability to see through the

jungle that was before him and plot a path forward. I am sure that he did that not only for us in the ALP, for which we are eternally grateful, but also for his family. I am sure that that pathway was always made clear to his family.

To Tim's wife, Erin, and their boys, Declan, Rory and Liam: I know that you meant everything to him. My heart goes out to you and all your family in the gallery this afternoon. Tim really cared about everyone he met but particularly about the young people in his community. I know that when he spoke to me as education minister, he always spoke about what we could do for the young people, what we could do for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the South Sea islanders in that area. He was genuinely passionate about what we could do to better their lives—that true Labor virtue of knowing the value of education—and what we could do to benefit young people and keep them in the community. 'Mr Mackay' was always about Mackay and wanting to keep them in Mackay.

It was wonderful to hear Tim's stories, his support and his at times gratuitous advice. It was always fantastic. As I said, he was salt of the earth and I will always remember him as such. He was kind, generous and funny but, most importantly, he was humble. He was a very humble man who took everything in his stride and did what he could not only for the betterment of his family and his friends but also for the benefit of the community at large. He was a salt-of-the-earth man with a very modern twist, and he always had that modern way of looking at things.

I extend my deep condolences to all of you in the gallery—to Erin and his three beloved boys, and to his brothers, his sister and their families. He was a great uncle. He will be greatly missed.

The last time we were together, at the house of the member for Mackay—Erin was there—there was a stack of people there, not only from the party but also from the community generally. It was great to be able to pay tribute to him at that meeting. It was wonderful to be able to give him the respect that I know he gave everybody he met. As I said, he will be missed. I wish his family all the very best. May he rest in peace.