




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2020

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Mulherin, Hon. TS

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.18 pm): It is a great honour to be able to speak to the condolence motion for the Hon. Tim Sean Mulherin, the eldest son of Helen and the late Leo Mulherin. He was the beloved husband of Erin and the proud dad to Declan, Liam and Rory, and he was such a good mate to so many. Welcome to the whole Mulherin family who are up in the gallery. As the former speakers have said, family was everything to Tim, and I know that his heart would be singing to know that you have all made the effort to be here today.

In 1995 Tim became the fourth Labor member of parliament to represent the seat of Mackay since 1915 following William Forgan Smith, Fred Graham and Ed Casey. Tim was very proud to be part of Labor's strong history in the Mackay region and he was great mates with Ed. He was his campaign manager and Tim really talked fondly about the mentoring and the sage advice Ed had given him.

Tim being Tim, he continued that tradition. He mentored me, he passed on his wisdom and his knowledge of politics in Queensland. Out of the blue Tim would ring. He would have a thought and he would pass it on. Whether you had time to listen or not, that is what you had to do. He would tell his story and then say, 'Oh I've got to go. I'm busy.' He always shared the knowledge that he had, which I sorely miss.

One thing about Tim is that he loved politics and he lived it. He loved the tactics. He loved planning for the future. He was always trying to be ahead of change. He loved developing policy and he loved talking policy. He just loved getting things done and he wanted things done quickly. He also enjoyed bringing groups together. He really loved meeting people and continually expanding his knowledge of the world which he passed on to those he met.

As has been spoken about, he never wanted to give up being the member for Mackay, but he did so in 2015. He had his own health issues to deal with and he was also grieving the recent loss of his father, Leo, and that really affected Tim. He also wanted to be close to his family.

His decision to retire from political life gave Erin and the boys five precious years of having Tim close to home. But Tim being Tim, there was no retirement for him. He just could not sit still. He was appointed chair of the Mackay HHS. Once his feet were under the table, boy, they knew he was there. He started auditing the practices of the hospital. He began working with government and planning for new services and expansion. Mackay now has a 24/7 heart catheter lab and a dedicated orthopaedics ward. He also started the planning for the rebuild of the Sarina Hospital. These are just a few of his pet projects.

This position was not enough to keep him busy. He also joined the board of Harrup Park Country Club, Mackay's cricket club, and they have a large number of affiliated sports clubs. Tim being the planner, he embarked on developing a concept for the Great Barrier Reef Arena which everybody on this side of the House certainly knows about. He lobbied and then he badgered and then he did some

more badgering. It was not just state government; he badgered the federal government as well until he secured the funding for the project. This precinct, when completed, will be such a great asset for the Mackay community for many years to come.

When the local media heard of Tim's passing, they immediately dubbed him 'Mr Mackay' because his list of achievements for our region is extraordinary. He is embedded in all aspects of Mackay life: in the trade union movement, the arts, health, sports, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and our South Sea islander community. There is not a part of life in Mackay that Tim did not touch.

With an eye on the future, he was an advocate for establishing the Queensland University of Technology sugar research laboratory on the grounds of Racecourse Mill. He could see years previously that there was a need to diversify that industry, and the sugar industry will do well in having that facility. He was always scheming, planning and making sure that Mackay got its fair share. As the Premier has outlined, there were so many projects in Mackay: bridges, the entertainment centre and the Botanic Gardens, and the rebuild of the Mackay Base Hospital was such a large achievement for Tim.

Tim was a humble man. There were many achievements for which he never sought recognition. There are many people in the Mackay region who come up to me now and tell me a story, very personal stories, of how Tim would quietly go around and help people during very difficult times of their lives. He knew that there were times when you did not go out looking for accolades, that you needed to show people the dignity of giving them an opportunity to get their lives together with support. He was such a good person like that. That is why the people of Mackay really love him. People share those stories about him.

We all know that Tim was related to the whole world. It did not matter where he went, he found a way to weasel his way into your family tree. If he could not do it, he would find somebody he knew that you were related to, so that would make him feel like he was part of the family. We all knew that Tim was proudly Irish—or he wanted to be Irish—and he loved Irish connections on his family tree. Tim was one of those Australians who was more Irish than the Irish. It was only fitting that Tim would meet and fall in love with the beautiful Erin, the daughter of Irish immigrants—as close as he could get to being Irish. Erin is that strong woman who stood behind Tim. She is strong herself. She is kind, she is sensible and she was so loyal to Tim. She stood with him and a lot of the time single-handedly raised those beautiful young men who are sitting in the gallery today because Tim was away so much. Erin ensured that she kept the household happy and nurtured. She allowed Tim to show off his skills of cooking the perfect steak on the Weber and share many of his bottles of red wine, which we all paid for the next day. Tim was a family man and that was the most important thing to him. He just loved talking about those Sunday roasts when he got the whole family together. He loved the Christmas gatherings as well.

Erin, it was your selflessness that allowed Tim's career to flourish as the member for Mackay, as a cabinet minister and as deputy leader of the opposition. So we thank you, Erin, Declan, Liam and Rory for allowing Tim to serve Queensland. I might give a little Irish blessing to the family—

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

The rains fall soft upon your fields ...

Vale Tim. I second the motion.