




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 2 December 2020

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Mulherin, Hon. TS

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (3.36 pm): I rise to contribute to the condolence motion and to honour the life and service of Timothy Sean Mulherin. Just after Tim's passing in September, I was sitting down with one of his friends Donna O'Donoghue during the last sitting week before the election. I said to Donna, 'There's an added reason for many of us to be re-elected,' and that added reason is to contribute to this condolence motion, to put on the permanent record of the parliament our love, honour and respect for Tim Mulherin. I am additionally grateful to the good people of Morayfield for re-electing me so that I can be in a position to contribute to this debate.

I will always remember Tim as a friend and a comrade but more widely, as we have already heard today, he will be forever remembered as a great of the Australian Labor Party and of his beloved Mackay community. Most importantly—and, critically, most importantly to him because he told me so—he will be remembered as a devoted family member, a man who loved his family with all his being.

My thoughts continue to be with Erin and the boys, to all of his family and friends. As many in speaking to this motion have already noted, Tim was so devoted to his family and he would constantly tell everyone how proud he was of them and what they were doing and what they were up to. Importantly, he knew that they were also equally devoted to him. It is an awareness that I know Tim felt tremendously comforted by, because he was away so often and he contributed so much to the Labor Party and to Queensland. For him to know that his family were tremendously devoted to him comforted him immensely.

Tim was a man of great wisdom and he offered advice very freely. One piece of advice that confronts me daily was to always work hard to get the balance right between work and family. As many in this House would appreciate, that balance is very hard to achieve. But I try, and in memory of Tim I will try harder. I know that Erin will be missing Tim immensely. If the story is true, there was an inevitability to Tim and Erin getting together. I was told that Tim's introduction to Erin was as a result of a dare by one of his mates after a few drinks. Apparently, Tim was challenged to approach Erin and ask her out. The line from Tim's mate went something like this: 'Tim, just think about it, mate. If you and Erin get married, she'll become Erin Mulherin.' Mr Speaker, the rest is history.

As we have heard, Tim always looked for a personal connection of some sort with the people he came across. Six degrees of separation was too many for Tim. He forged many good and, importantly, genuine friendships during his lifetime. Two of those friendships, as we have heard already, were shaped right here in this chamber. It was during the early 2000s that Tim would sit up the back with Kenny Hayward, the former member for Kallangur, and Peter Lawlor, the former member for Southport, in those three seats up there. Tim, Ken and Peter truly loved sitting there, so much so that they

nicknamed themselves the 'Full Bench'. From there they would cast judgement over everything and anything, and to the displeasure of the then Speaker they were able to humorously heckle without consequence. I am told they always seemed to get away with it.

That introduction to always getting away with it continued with Tim's advice to me when I first joined the parliament in 2009. As many people would appreciate, I took over from Kenny Hayward. Ken said to me, 'Learn from Mulherin, you can't go too wrong.' In our first caucus meetings I would sit up the back with Tim Mulherin and Peter Lawlor, and they would talk and talk and talk. It got me in trouble with the then premier, Anna Bligh, who said, 'Maybe you need to find another seat.' Mulherin and Lawlor always got away with it.

It is no surprise that we have heard of the respect people had for Tim Mulherin. I heard a story just recently that, when he was the agriculture minister, he would sneak out and smoke on the Turbot Street footpath with departmental staff. He got to know some of them so well that he got a bit of a reputation as an 'agony aunt' because he used to dispense advice to them about personal, family or marital difficulties. It does go to show that he was always a man of the people. He was always grassroots. He always wanted to hear people's stories.

One of Tim's friends, Lindsay Marshall, wanted me to share these thoughts with the House: 'It is a remarkable feat to rise from seven MPs in opposition to minority government within a single term. Tim, as deputy opposition leader, was a key part of that result. Tim's experience, temperament, guidance and political and personal talents brightened many of the dark days in opposition. His personal standing in the wider Labor movement helped rebuild bridges in the wake of the 2012 defeat. The solid policy work he did alongside others in the small opposition team helped engineer the 2015 transition back to government. It was that work that laid the foundations for the majority governments that have followed.'

As the Premier quite rightly highlighted, one person—Tim Mulherin—changed the history of Queensland. It just goes to show that one person can make a difference. Tim is a legend of the Australian Labor Party. He was a strong contributor to public life and the people of Queensland. He was a good and genuine friend to many. As I said earlier, most importantly to him he was a devoted family man who loved his family with all his being. Tim was one of the most fundamentally decent people I have ever known, and it is indeed an honour to know him, and through Tim it is an honour to know his family and friends. Rest in peace, Tim Mulherin.