



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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## **MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

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

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (2.45 pm): Many others in this place and in the wider community knew Tim Mulherin, the late member for Mackay, far better than me. They, far more than I, can—and as we have heard today—will be able to tell tales of his time growing up in Mackay; of his love of family, and I acknowledge them here in the gallery today—the love of which was great; of his love of the Labor movement, which was also great; and of his love of and passion for Queensland and, importantly, regional Queensland, his home. But perhaps I can shed some light on Tim as I knew him—as a parliamentarian, as a minister, as a colleague; as someone he did not really need to speak to, someone from the inner north of Brisbane almost 1,000 kilometres away from his home and so someone who was never likely to be able to vote for him, and even if I had been in his electorate probably never would have, not that that probably would have worried him in any event.

It would have been easy for Tim simply to ignore me not only when he was a minister in government and I was a freshly elected member but even when he held the exalted position of deputy leader of the opposition—a position, I should say, that we both held at different times and in very similar circumstances coming from small numbers. Do not forget: I was a member of the Liberal Party when we had eight! He could have simply done his duty and then never said another word to me, but that was never how he behaved. Despite our political differences, despite coming from different parts of the state and despite whatever happened in this place, Tim never did anything other than with apparent calmness and decency. He did say to me on occasions when things had not quite gone the way he thought they should that there are swings and roundabouts and that past actions can come back to haunt you, and I have to say my God have they come back to haunt me!

I am not the only person he treated with that calmness and decency. My overwhelming feedback from others, both in here and outside, is that that is how he treated people from whatever backgrounds and come what may. I have a great campaign worker—a former Ergon employee who worked at the electricity board. During one of those exciting Saturday morning campaign roadsides we have all just recently endured, he told me of his experience with Tim back when Tim was a union organiser and a clerk at the Mackay Energy Board. He told me a few stories that I really cannot and should not repeat in this place about some of their actions together, but he concluded with words, after these stories, to the effect that Tim was probably the most decent union official he had ever dealt with. My campaign worker does not like union officials. That was high praise indeed. And he did say, with a bit of a sideways glance at me, that he could have done with a bit more exercise as well! I do not know if Tim really loved this place, but I do know that he saw it as the best way to make a change and to do things to improve the lot of Queenslanders according to his principles and beliefs.

Tim's contribution in this chamber was mainly measured and always plain speaking. He treated colleagues with respect and, as others have said, he did know what he was on about. He gave freely of his advice, as others have testified to here today—and I am glad I am not the only one who received it—from the experiences of the time he had here and as an elected representative, but he was also

unafraid to talk about matters that he knew of from his time as a minister and where work needed to be kept up, where a project was working and where the pitfalls, the charlatans and the shysters were, and as anyone in government knows there is no shortage of those. He was genuinely interested in the common good. He would pass on messages, without betraying a confidence, about those things that he thought important. When I was Treasurer I can recall in particular his concerns about disquiet in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton in relation to ongoing school funding. I am not sure whether he knew that my wife Mary had been to the installation of our former parish priest Michael McCarthy as the Bishop of Rockhampton or not, but he certainly knew how to get the message across. Needless to say Catholic school funding in Rockhampton was preserved.

Tim was always up for a chat, particularly on the familiar walk that many of us have had from the back of the chamber after question time, past the Clerk's office and through the Stranger's Dining Room. It did not have to be about anything much, it did not have to be about anything controversial; he was always happy to have a chat. My view of Tim was necessarily very different from many in this chamber who knew him far better, but perhaps also my view is one that was shared by very many people who met him and found him the same way I did: ready for a chat, free with his advice, always good with a story, a fighter for what he believed in, with a little bit of cunning and a fair degree of guile, passionate about Mackay and the regions and a believer in family and friends.

To his wife Erin and his boys Declan, Liam and Rory I extend my condolences on the passing of a fine and decent man, an enduring servant of the community of Mackay and, most importantly, your husband and dad.