




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Pegg, Mr D

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (3.47 pm): I stand to offer my condolences to Lindsey and Graham, to the family of Duncan Pegg and to those who loved him, worked with him and were moved by his place and existence on earth. We come here to offer condolence. I do not often think about what that means. I looked up the root of the word—‘con’ means ‘with’ and ‘dolance’ comes from the root of ‘doleful’ and ‘dour’. It is Latin and comes from the period of grief where a loved one was lost and the loss could be shared and reduced. I know that on this level there is much love and loss, but it pales compared to the loss you face as a family. We are with you though in condolence for all that we can offer.

Of all those on this level, I was the first to meet Duncan. I met him in the very first week he came down from Rocky to Griffith University. He was so young, so little and unsure in my mind and memory, yet I quickly saw he was knowledgeable, quickwitted and even then could stand his ground. I have a distinct memory in that first week of him telling off a misguided leftist who was trying to recruit him in the undercroft. He was telling them that he knew Trotsky was just as bad as all the rest of them.

He told so many the story that I was the person who got him to sign up to the Labor Party. He also told many stories about my behaviour at that time. From near that first day I met him to the very last, he lived his life in Labor politics. He embraced it, loved it and it was part of his many dimensioned identity and being. He was passionate about social justice and treating people fairly, especially if they came from a different background, and fairness for workers. He knew that to be socially just, results did not arrive just because you wanted them or posted about them on the internet; you had to organise. He became a lawyer and worked with my future wife at Sciaccas Lawyers and then as a union organiser. He was someone who certainly did not run with the pack and took his own path. Today I honour that quirky spirit and I wear this sky-blue tie to note his simply inexplicable support for the Blues in the State of Origin.

Duncan’s mum told me a story that I think sums up a little bit about him. He organised a kind of sweep with his brothers on State of Origin night, picking for himself all of the New South Wales stars and giving his younger brothers all of the Queensland players who were unlikely to get off the bench. I think the story says a lot about how he cut against the grain at times but he also knew that if you wanted to get outcomes, whether over his brothers or in his political life, you needed to organise how the cards were going to be dealt.

Outside the place or in the little gathering up there they diminish and disparage a life lived in political service, yet for me Duncan’s life was dedicated to Labor and our goals. There is something deeply honourable in our service to our party, to be part of a life devoted to the uplifting of Australian life through a political institution that has been the catalyst for so much good in Australian life. Duncan lived that life and it was a life worth living.

I cannot help but reflect, with dolefulness, on the 40 years of continued life we will miss. After we got the news, we gathered at Duncan's office. I spoke with James and in a moment of philosophical indulgence asked him: given the millions of years of existence in geological time, does a life lived so richly matter if it was 40 years or 80 years? James, wise beyond his years, silently looked at me giving me time, and I answered my own question: it means everything. The brief candle of expression we have here is in and of itself everything we can know.

Usually we do not get to see and hear others reflect on public life, but I was lucky to be with Duncan as we did get a chance to do that. At one event the public eulogised him as a saint; at another upstairs with drinks here his mates teased him with embarrassing stories. They were both essential parts of him. I looked around his many friends and noted how different they were, how diverse they were and how many different walks of life they came from. He reached out to many people in different worlds and in different ways.

Now there is something I have to do that is not normal to do in a condolence motion. He would always say that I needed to attack the LNP whenever I got the chance. I know the member for Scenic Rim is next and I have a 20-minute speech here giving him a character analysis! Sorry, mate, I let you down. I have let you down a little bit of late, and it hurts.

I want to take a moment to thank the then deputy prime minister Michael McCormack. I note that the speech in federal parliament was not unusual and it was a brave man that, as dark clouds were gathering around his political career, he took the time to listen to Jim Chalmers and to say, 'Here is something worthwhile that we can share about the life of someone who matters so much.'

I keep thinking I will look around and see him. He would always save for me some piece of analysis of someone on that side, or even someone on our own side! I keep thinking that in the next campaign when I have a difficult problem I will ring him up and ask him. I know that he left instructions for so many people. I kept wondering why he never left me instructions to help James, the new member for Stretton. He never did. I think the answer was simple: he knew me well enough to know that I would always do that. I will miss his advice. I will miss his presence. I will miss the fact that he always had a different way of looking at life and always looked for a contribution to make Australians more socially fair and just.