



Speech By  
**Melissa McMahon**


**MEMBER FOR MACALISTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 September 2021

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**Pegg, Mr D**

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (4.58 pm): I rise to contribute to this condolence motion and put on record my thoughts, feelings and condolences to Duncan's family and closest friends. Now I have this chance, for the first time ever I would like to take the opportunity to have a last word in the round with Duncan. Duncan has the distinction, dubious or otherwise, of being the first Labor member I ever met or engaged with in any political manner. I know in my first speech I acknowledged those past and current members of this House who supported me to run for the first time, but on reflection that honour actually belongs to Duncan because in 2001 I too was a student at Griffith University at the Mount Gravatt campus. I was studying part-time while I was working full-time as a police officer.

One night after footy training, I attended a politics in the pub event at the Nathan campus. There was a flyer for a free drink. Ostensibly, the event was to discuss the rise of and response to Hansonism, which was prevalent at the time. It was there that I first met Duncan Pegg. We got on pretty well, but you could see very much his mind ticking over when he realised what I did for a living.

In the context of 2001, in Brisbane we were preparing to host CHOGM and, as a member of the Public Safety Response Team, I had spent weeks and months preparing for what was predicted to be a tumultuous event with many and varied planned protests. One of Duncan's biggest issues on the campus at the time was with the controlling body of the Griffith Uni student council. He referred to them as the 'Trots'. I was not 100 per cent sure what that meant. They were expending student council funds on supporting protest activities and bankrolling CHOGM blockades, so he knew how to pull my strings.

As I said, you could see Duncan's mind ticking over. In that manner he convinced me to run on the ticket at Mount Gravatt for the SRC for the Real Student Party so I ended up on my first-ever ballot. I think that night I actually might have joined the Labor Party and, listening to everyone talk, I might have joined the Right. I am happy to be corrected on the record for that.

I had never campaigned for anything in my life but luckily I had someone like Duncan to take me through my first-ever campaign. Also luckily, my little sister had lots of friends on campus so that helped me get over the line. I managed to get up for my first-ever electoral win on a platform of student money being spent on student campus and free pancake mornings. Duncan's ticket stormed home in that election.

Duncan also liked to have a bit of fun playing on my job. I think it has been commented that he was a bit of a stirrer. He would ask me along to the student functions and parties. You could see the glint in his eye as he would introduce me to the rest of the partygoers: 'Here's Mel. She's on the SRC as well and she's a copper.' I am sure he did that just to hear the dead silence that would descend over the uni student party as a few people subtly left the room.

I cannot say that the life of student politics took with me and 2002 would be my only stint at the Griffith Uni SRC, but that was no fault of Duncan's. He made it fun and he made it accessible, which is not something that you can often say about student politics. I will remember the curly mop of blond hair. I will remember that cheeky grin. I will remember the sparring and the quick quip.

I would not encounter Duncan again until 2014, when we were both candidates for the 2015 state election. He was running for his beloved Stretton, which was exactly where he was at home and where many of those uni student parties had happened. He was at home, he was in his element and he loved the local area. He had my 100 per cent support because that was my old stomping ground and I could not think of a better representative for the electorate or my old high school, Runcorn State High School.

Duncan, you were a friend and a mentor despite your young age. You will be missed here in this House and in the party that you loved so much. You will be missed in your community that loved you so much. Rest in peace.