




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 2 September 2021

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

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 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (3.27 pm): A lot has been said about Duncan; it is hard to know what to add. This extended condolence motion is testament to the number of members who want to share their memories of him and also of how rare and sad it is to lose a sitting member of this parliament, especially one so young. I acknowledge Duncan's family in the gallery today. I knew Duncan as a true believer, a trade unionist, a sports tragic and a supporter of multicultural communities across Queensland. He was kind, funny and worked hard every day to serve the people of Stretton. In his final weeks he was awarded the prestigious life membership of the Australian Labor Party.

Duncan and I became friends when we were both at uni more than 20 years ago. He was at Griffith where he presided over a student politics empire that probably still endures. I was at UQ and a lot less successful. We were in Young Labor together, along with many other members of our caucus. We had some very eventful times in politics and occasionally while enjoying a drink or two at the Griffith SRC bar or salubrious venues like the Criterion and Alice's Rock Cafe.

I quickly learned that Duncan was a naturally great campaigner. He was brilliant at strategy. He knew how to identify issues and build coalitions. He knew how to win. Those are skills that I saw throughout his life: in student politics, in his legal practice, in his trade union work, in his community and in this parliament. He commented recently, 'Who would have thought all those years ago, drinking spirits at Alice's, we would one day both serve in the Queensland parliament together?'

I was forever indebted to Duncan for the support he gave my father-in-law, Ross. Ross had a very distressing workplace law matter. My wife, Kim, was very upset too. I called Con Sciacca and said that I needed his best employment lawyer and Con put Duncan on the case. Duncan not only won a settlement but also gave Ross great support and comfort.

I feel very fortunate to serve here with a whole bunch of people I have known most of my adult life, including Duncan. It meant we could catch up together more often, although I admit his encyclopedic sport knowledge was intimidating. Duncan was a much loved member of the NUW family, which carried through to my own union when the two merged to form the United Workers Union.

Duncan loved the Stretton community and they loved him representing them here. He especially loved to speak in here. I know there is a highlight reel floating around. He seemed to enjoy being provocative, not low-key like me! His last speech was the most powerful I have been present for, which is amazing given how unwell he was by then. He did not waste the platform he had then, with all of us listening intently, to keep campaigning. His words about voluntary assisted dying still ring in my ears. I have quoted them in every speech I have made on that topic since.

This year we commemorate the passing of another former member of this parliament, another trade unionist, campaigner and renowned orator. One hundred years ago, Thomas Joseph Ryan passed away. Many years ago I memorised the quote on the statue to Ryan in Brisbane's Queens Park and I think they are fitting words as we remember Duncan. The plaque says—

The life that ceased in mid-career

The light of other men shall be

With purpose high and conscience clear

Who seek to serve the state as he.

Vale, Duncan Pegg.