




Speech By
Ali King

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

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ADJOURNMENT

Eaves, Mr GR

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.25 pm): Tonight I rise to pay tribute to a committed unionist, a proud member of the great Australian Labor Party and a good friend, Gregory Richard Eaves. Greg was born on 4 November 1955, the youngest child of Victor and Lily Eaves, following Pat, John and Barbara. He spent his childhood outdoors, with long days at the beach and exploring Bribie Island with his cousins, Ian and Jon. They would set out at dawn, roam all day and return only for meals.

In the early 2000s, Greg returned to his childhood refuge of Bribie Island to live, which is where I met him. I remember Greg saying, 'We need a woman to run for Pumicestone!' Given he started in the union movement and the Labor Party at a time when women were more likely to make tea than make policy, I found his support really heartening. There was no such thing as empty words with Greg, and he was a staunch supporter in my 2020 campaign. He somehow got hold of a bus at a bargain price, he helped sticker it up, and took to the road as a mobile billboard every single day. It was an absolute dog of a bus: it was temperamental, it was liable to stall suddenly in 100 kilometre per hour zones and it needed all of Greg's expertise to keep it running. However, Greg was so proud when we won and I have a beautiful photo of him next to the infamous bus.

As a bus driver for many years, Greg was deeply impacted by a series of terrible bus accidents in the late 1980s—the Gillies Range bus crash in 1987, the Cowper bush crash in 1989 which happened down the road from my home and the Kempsey bus crash in 1989—and he went on to fight hard for laws requiring seatbelts on buses as a result. He was also extremely distressed by the fatal attack on Brisbane bus driver, Manmeet Sharma, in 2016. He advocated strongly for bus driver safety measures going forward. Greg was really pleased when our Palaszczuk government implemented bus driver safety screens, but the best activists are never satisfied and he would often send me long and sometimes acerbic text messages about the need for more reform.

Greg faced the challenge of a diagnosis of motor neurone disease in October last year. This was especially distressing to his family, as his dad and sister had also died from motor neurone disease. Like many of Greg's friends, I did not even know he was ill until close to the end. The text messages kept coming and he was tenacious to the final days, defying medical advice to take part in the walk for MND just a week before his passing.

Today I offer my condolences to Greg's loved ones, especially Sam, Adam, William, Yolanda and his stepdaughter, Kelli. Thank you for sharing Greg with us. Greg was tenacious about making the world a better place and tenacious in his commitment to Labor and the union movement. As a committed anti-racist, I know he would want me to say please vote yes for a Voice to Parliament this weekend. Vale, Greg Eaves. I will miss you very much.