



Speech By  
**Melissa McMahon**


**MEMBER FOR MACALISTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2023

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**Barton, Hon. TA**

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (9.54 am): I rise to make my contribution to the condolence motion for the Hon. Tom Barton. From the outset I acknowledge family in the gallery today, for, while all of Tom's achievements in his career and this House have been acknowledged by the speakers before me, I know that his family represents his greatest achievement. Everyone here in this House would no doubt acknowledge that career highlights can only often be attained when they have the unwavering support of those closest to them. This is a demanding job and the portfolios that Tom held necessitated a great deal of travel.

In making my contribution I acknowledge that I did not know Tom nearly as well as many of the speakers before me, with his time finishing in this parliament in 2006—well before I had even contemplated joining the Labor Party or becoming involved in politics—but I did have occasion to meet Tom a number of times not only as a long-time Logan resident but also as a Logan police officer. Tom was the minister for police and corrective services from June 1998 to February 2001 and on several occasions had the opportunity to visit police stations that I worked at, in Slacks Creek and Logan Central. Tom's visits and discussions with constables would be largely informal, and he had the ability to set officers at ease with his disarming approach. I sat on a number of constable consultative committees at my stations, and Tom was always very keen to hear what first-responding officers had as priorities. I guess that was in keeping with not only his role as police minister but also his background in the union movement—listening to workers and advocating for them.

It would be almost another 15 years until I would meet Tom again—this time in a political capacity. Over the years Tom's seat of Waterford included what would become key parts of the new seat of Macalister. His first office was just a few metres up the road from where my office was in Main Street, Beenleigh, before it was relocated to where it is now in Waterford. In fact, his legacy can be seen throughout my electorate in Beenleigh and parts of Loganholme, including major upgrades to Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road between the M1 and Bryants Road. The plinth at the corner of Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road and California Creek Road has Tom's name on it. It would be the starting point for my runs over the past few years.

I remember the old Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road, particularly at the old Trading Post site near Atlantic Drive, because it would go under a few feet of water every time there was a summer storm deluge, and as police we were often dispatched to retrieve foolhardy drivers from their vehicles. The upgraded four lanes of Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road were open just over 20 years ago, according to the plaque, and what better way to celebrate this legacy than the work of this government to continue that upgrade of Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road towards the Redlands.

He was responsible for securing upgrades and the support of the Beenleigh PCYC and the former Beenleigh senior citizens centre. Tom also saw a major upgrade of the Beenleigh Police Station in his time, and he was very pleased to see that one of my 2020 election commitments was to not only a further upgrade of the Beenleigh Police Station but also a new purpose-built facility to cater for growing numbers at the station.

By the time I was elected to the seat of Macalister, Tom's health was in a state that prohibited him from being able to participate in most election campaigns; however, I did catch up with him prior to the 2020 election where he gave the usual Tom Barton straight-shooting advice. Looking at Tom's results in his seat of Waterford, I was always more than happy to take that advice. Over his five elections in the seat of Waterford he achieved primary votes of 54 per cent, 59 per cent, 46 per cent, 56 per cent and 57 per cent. As I said, I was very happy to listen to Tom on points of campaigning.

He was pleased to see a former police officer, particularly one who worked in his area, in parliament, and even more so one who is as avid a Rugby League fan as he was. While ill health did step in and convince Tom that it was time to leave this House, it did not stop him from his involvement in community and volunteering. He remained a larrikin right to the end. One only need look at his last recorded role on LinkedIn, which reads: 'Tom Barton, raconteur and master of mischief'.

On behalf of the people of Macalister, and particularly Beenleigh, I offer my heartfelt condolences to his family here today and those far and wide and his friends and former colleagues. Vale, Tom Barton.