



Speech By

Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 30 October 2025

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommamey—ALP) (10.03 am): I rise to speak to the condolence motion for the former member for Caloundra. I found him to be a genuinely lovely colleague for the term that we shared together. I echo the Premier's sentiments about his character. I also found Mark to be a very kind and thoughtful colleague and member of this place. I have a couple of unremarkable memories about Mark that I wanted to share, not because they were any particularly great moment in either of our lives, but because I think they really speak to his character as a member of parliament and a human being.

I remember standing in line at Strangers coffee shop late in my first term. Members might recall that I was very heavily pregnant with my daughter Elyse. Mark was standing there beside me. He got quite misty-eyed as he was looking at me. He asked me how I was feeling and how I was getting on in what was my very late pregnancy. I was probably seven or eight months along by then. We chatted amiably for a while and then he asked me if it was my first. I was quite amused by that because I had a 10-year-old and 12-year-old at home, and I realised how little your colleagues sometimes know about our personal life in this place. He was so kind and thoughtful in taking a moment just to check in on my wellbeing. That is a memory that, while it is unremarkable, always stayed with me because of his kindness in taking a moment to check in with a colleague who was probably a little bit under the weather at that moment. I was very tickled pink that he thought it was my first baby.

The second occasion was after he retired. I was doing some postpartum shopping to get some new clothes because my old ones did not fit. I was so tired that I do not remember whether on this day I had Elyse with me, but I remember seeing Mark McArdle's face across the Queen Street mall. I called out to him and I like to think he did not hear me, but I really wanted to say hello so I kept calling out. I think I finally ran halfway across the mall to wave him down and say 'Hi, how are you?' It was only when I was right in front of him that the glaze came off his face. I call it the retirement look. He had a look of general wellbeing and happiness that I cannot see on any faces around here today. He was relaxed, he was happy, he was in his element. He was daydreaming, but he had that thoughtful Mark McArdle look that I think we all know. I updated him on how Elyse was going, but I was very keen to hear how his retirement was going. He looked happy, he looked well-rested and he looked a little bit off in his own little world. That gave me great hope for all of us that, one day when we leave this place, we should enjoy a retirement like the one he got to experience briefly.

I do just want to touch on the fact that, sadly, Mark did not get a long retirement—68 years of age is far too young to lose somebody. He deserved so much longer than he got. I remember sharply drawing breath when I heard of his loss because he is the same age as my father. I think the unspoken bargain we all make is that we work hard and then when we leave this place we will have time to spend with our family, friends and loved ones doing the things we all enjoy. I am deeply sorry for the loss his family has sustained because I know they would have wanted to have so much more time with him. It is truly a loss to Queensland. He made great contributions to his party. He was somebody who every single member of this House who had the privilege of working with him greatly enjoyed. His loss will be deeply felt not just in his community but throughout Queensland for some years to come. Vale, Mark McArdle.