

EULOGY
ALISON RYAN
10 JUNE 2014

I was honoured that Alison had asked me some time ago to say a few words on her behalf today.

Alison and her family are long-time family friends.

We enjoyed holidays to the South Coast and many birthdays, parties and barbecues on the deck.

She also joined me as a member of the Tuggeranong Community Council.

I introduced Alison to the Council in 2008, not long after she lost her daughter Amy in a car accident.

Alison wanted Random Roadside Drug Testing in the ACT because her daughter had been lost in an accident that involved a drug affected driver.

Alison saw that it worked in other states, so why not the ACT.

When I became Council President in 2009 Alison served on my executive.

With the full support of the Council she began the campaign to introduce Random Roadside Drug Testing.

Alison was the driving force.

She galvanised the Council, rallied the support of local politicians, the media and the NRMA and led the drafting of the Council submission in support of Random Roadside Drug Testing.

Alison and her late Council colleague, Rusty Woodward, sat in the public gallery of the ACT Legislative Assembly every day the legislation was debated.

After two years of tough campaigning the legislation was finally adopted.

The ACT Leader of the Opposition, Jeremy Hanson, had this to say in the Assembly

“Today has been a victory. But it is not a victory for the Liberal Party. It is not a victory for the Greens. It is a victory for the community. It is a victory for our police force, who are charged with the responsibility of keeping us safe.

And it is a victory for people like Alison Ryan and everybody she represents who have lost a loved one because of an accident involving someone affected by drugs. That is a victory today and it is one for her and for those she represents.”

Despite her tragic loss, Alison turned a negative into a positive that will long benefit our community.

Thanks to Alison our roads are now safer for us, but more importantly they are safer for our kids.

Alison worked at Canberra Connect and saw the difficulties many people faced in paying their debts to the ACT Government.

Through Alison’s efforts the Council adopted a motion and campaigned for a fairer debt payment system, an issue that was eventually taken up by the Greens in the last ACT Assembly and put into legislation.

The then Member for Brindabella, Amanda Bresnan told the ACT Legislative Assembly,

“Some members will be interested to know that the Tuggeranong Community Council passed a motion asking for changes to address the harsh impact of fine suspension on people struggling to access work.

“ACT community organisations have documented numerous examples of how the ACT's inflexible traffic infringement system has caused severe hardships for disadvantaged Canberrans.”

Thanks to Alison, we now have a fairer debt payment system.

Alison was an active and much loved Council member.

She served on the Council executive when I was President from 2009 to 2012, helping us to man the Council information booth at the Tuggeranong Festival and to clean up the foreshore of Lake Tuggeranong.

She also served on the Council sub-committees and I know there were many nights at the Petrie household where important matters of community concern were thrashed out over a couple of good bottles of red.

Despite her illness she still enjoyed the company of Council members, attending meetings with her last being in April.

Alison helped to redraft the Council Constitution, but most of all; she will be remembered for making our roads safer.

The fact that we have former and current members of the ACT Legislative Assembly here today is testament to the impact of Alison's work on the Tuggeranong Community Council.

So much so, the ACT Chief Minister Katy Gallagher has asked that I pass on her deepest sympathies to Alison's family and many friends at this difficult time.

The Chief Minister also wished to say.....

"Alison was a tireless worker for the Canberra community, particularly for the people of Tuggeranong. Her drive, her positive attitude and her tenacity made our community a safer and better place. Alison leaves a lasting legacy that can only serve to inspire others to make a difference."

And the following message from the President of the Tuggeranong Community Council, Eric Traise.

"Alison was a wonderful person and a valued member of the Tuggeranong Community Council."

We teamed up several times during Lake clean ups. She was great fun to be with and pulled her weight even though she was obviously hurting.

A lesser person would have called it quits and gone home to rest. But that wasn't her way."

Member for Brindabella, Joy Burch, has also asked me to pass on her sympathies.

Alison was officially recognised for her Council, community and road safety work last year with the unveiling of plaque in her name in the "Footsteps to Follow" honour roll at the entrance to the Tuggeranong Town Park.

I and other Council members were proud to nominate her for this award.

This and her achievements on the Council will stand as her legacy to our community.

Finally, I personally wish to thank those Council members who comforted Alison throughout her illness.

I am sure your efforts helped to make her days brighter.

Thank you.

(Delivered by Darryl Johnston on behalf of the Tuggeranong Community Council)