**SALLY MCMANUS SPEECH**

**Andrew Casey Funeral – Tuesday 6th February, 2018**

Andrew and I caught up for a coffee late last year. It’s unusual for me to do this with anyone these days. But I made the time to meet up with Andrew, because he was Andrew. And there he was with his kind smile.

We talked about his trip to Burma, his observations on Buddhism, the socio-economic situation, racism, the union movements plans, the Turnbull Governments prospects, the media responses to certain issues, some of the innovative things unions are doing. He gave me his assessment on various people and asked a few slightly annoying questions about my personal life and pumped ever so carefully about who might be contenders for certain positions. As many of you know and as Mark Philips said, Andrew was also an incorrigible gossip.

When the news of his sudden death spread across social media, the shock, loss and grief spread across our movement. It did so in a way I have not seen before.

It is unusual for one person in the union movement to be as loved and respected as Andrew. And this love extended across many generations and across unions.

He was the first media officer at the ACTU and he worked for many diverse unions, which at the time was very unusual, as his position involved a high level of trust: ANMF, CFMEU, United Voice and the AWU. And of course, he was always an active member of his own union, the MEAA.

But more than that, Andrew was deeply loved and respected across the union movement and across generations.

This wasn’t because he was well connected (although he was) - it was because Andrew embodied what we all love about our movement - what it is to be a comrade. To care about the greater good of the movement, to lift everyone up, to be generous and to show solidarity. In his actions and his words (except for the gossip) he taught generations of unionists what it is to be a comrade.

He was generous in his advice and always ready to mentor. Many people across several generations have talked about this. He was generous with his time, with his energy and with his resources.

He shared his and his families story of persecution and of fleeing Hungary. Of being saved by people smugglers, coming to Australia as a refugee and growing up as an immigrant. As he dug up more and more information from his families past, he would share it with us all, and we all learnt and reflected.

Andrew educated his non-Jewish friendship network about Judaism on each of the important cultural days, explaining its significance and would always acknowledge the important dates of other cultures.

As with all internationalists, Andrew cared for the dignity of all human beings. Eric Lee the founder of LabourStart talks about Andrew’s dedication to the cause of workers’ rights everywhere. A trade unionist in HK said although he did not know Andrew personally, his actions during their democracy uprising were like someone lighting a candle in the dark. Just recently he spoke at a rally supporting the democracy movement in Iran. His dedication to the cause of workers struggles across the globe was extraordinary. We have all seen him at every refugee march, every union event wherever there was a fight for the oppressed.

Andrew was an innovator. He ran the first online campaign in Australia, ran LabourStart which ran the first international online campaigns and he and I cooked up the first network of union social media campaigners. These still exist today and were the platforms we have built on ever since. The campaigning skills our movement now has in this area is because of Andrew.

When we heard the terrible news of his death, a collective pain bounced across social media and has been shared in many a conversation since.

There is no one who knew our big, diverse trade union family better than Andrew and we loved him. We have lost a dear, dear comrade. We honour his life and his legacy.

From his union family to Andrew’s family - we share your grief and offer our solidarity and condolences.