

8.1. Mayoral Minute - 27/06/2022 - Vale Jim Nichols

Report by Mayor – Councillor Maree Statham

Commentary

It is with great sadness that I acknowledge and commemorate the recent tragic death of Council employee Jim Nichols, who was killed while riding his bike on the Great Western Highway Lithgow on 9 June 2022.

He was 67.

Jim commenced work with Council in November 1977 as a building inspector and worked continuously in a number of roles until his retirement as Development Manager, nearly 43 years later in July 2020 returning to work for Council one day a week doing building inspections a short time later.

Jim witnessed many changes in the Lithgow community, the makeup of Council staff and elected members, as well as the planning system. He worked very hard and had high standards. He was a man of strong principles and convictions and a strong sense of right and wrong. Not afraid to tell it how he saw it. Old school you might say.

But he was also very modern in his attitudes. He was appalled by sexism and racism and by the way asylum seekers and the disadvantaged were often used for political advantage.

He enjoyed being a mentor to young staff and was very loyal to them, if not disappointed when the success of his mentoring meant they inevitably left Council for career progression elsewhere. Jim was much loved in this place. He was a big part of the glue that helped keep Council together. He also made his mark on the Lithgow community. He played a big part in the redevelopment of the Union Theatre, Crystal Theatre, Meadow Flat Hall and Lithgow Library. Accessibility for people with a disability was a passion for him and the installation of the many fully accessible, self cleaning toilets around the LGA was his initiative.

When Council restored the Lithgow Blast Furnace site for public use in recent years, Jim was fond of recalling the story of how decades previously he had been directed by the then General Manager to bulldoze it. Jim knew that even though Blast Furnace wasn't yet heritage listed, this wasn't right. He somehow never quite got to it, the General Manager left and the rest is history! Jim took up cycling in recent years, something that brought him much pleasure. In the past two years since his retirement and with more time on his hands he rode 100's of kilometers most weeks and was regularly seen around town.

I know that current and former staff and the many members of the community he came into contact with are grieving after Jim's death. On behalf of the Council I extend sincere condolences to them and to his two adult daughters Lucy and Clare, and to his ex-wife Rebecca Nichols.

These sad circumstances remind me of the tremendous service that people in this Council provide to the city's community – none more so than Jim Nichols. Jim has been lost to us but his fingerprints are all over this city, in the most positive of ways.

Attachments

Nil

Recommendation

THAT the Mayoral Minute Vale Jim Nichols be noted.