

Harriet Nixon: A celebration of life and a call to action.
Delivered by Doug A.B Wyllie at a Memorial Service for Harriet.
Burgmann College, The Australian National University
Saturday 25 February 2017

Good morning everybody.

It is a great honour and privilege to speak to the memory of this very special young lady. I knew Harriet both as a friend and as a colleague, and I hope to offer a very brief insight into the way she influenced me and the legacy she presents to all of us as we walk on.

Harriet was, without a doubt, the most organised, diligent, emotionally intelligent and fiercely independent leader of her age I have come across. In my employment I'm blessed to be able to work daily with young people of incredible substance, but Harriet was something else entirely. She led from the front, but wasn't afraid put her shoulder to the wheel and push from the rear. She was incredibly funny.

I think this memorial should be joyful and not mournful. But it is confronting none the less. Not only because Harriet's passing has wounded us, but because it challenges us to reflect on how we navigate our own lives. And it reinforces the fragile reality of life. Because the truth is come Monday we'll attend our classes and go to work. We'll train in sport teams, study together and in a few months some of us will run to Sydney. Our lives, though emptier and colder for this loss-will go on. So the struggle we now face-is how we can best honour Harriet's memory through all of this.

Harriet was a friend to all and she gave her all. 21 years-so short-so incredibly packed. Harriet leaves the world a much better place than when she found it. Civic2Surf is one such example. I don't have to tell you what batyr does or how Harriet helped- that's not the point.-The point is she identified a cause she was passionate about and she selflessly threw everything she could into it for no more glory or reward than that purest satisfaction-she knew she was improving the lives of others.

This is a legacy we can all strive to emulate. Whether its care flight-whether its batyr-if its Burgmann or Bruce or Unilodge-politics-a charity or cause that appeals to you. Find it. Throw yourself into it-lead it. Push and pull it. Make our world a better place. This is the best way for us to honour Harriet's memory and to ensure her legacy will live on.

Fiona, Ralph, Alicia, Sinan. The batyr family, the Burgmann community, the ANU campus and right up and down the eastern seaboard- we bleed and mourn with you through this. Harriet's passing has paused reality for all of us. It was way too soon, and completely unfair on all accounts. We've lost a friend, we've lost a champion, and we've lost a matriarch. It is going to take some time to adjust, -but we will all walk on together. We will make good as Harriet has made good.