



Rowan Peterson

03/06/1958 - 18/12/2024

It is an enormous privilege to deliver this eulogy for my beautiful friend, Rowan Peterson,

The story of Ro's life is filled with adventure, laughs and mischief. The main theme of Ro's life is the love she had for her family and friends. Ro grew up in Sydney with her parents, Frank and Helen, and her sister, Jane, and brother, Ric. It was on Weeroona

Avenue that Ro famously began her "Hollywood" career. Ro was specifically chosen, along with every other kid on the street, to star in the Milky Bar kid ad. It was a great day, as the kids could eat as many Milk Bars and drink as much lemonade as they wanted. It was one of Ro's favourite stories from her childhood.

Her sense of adventure started when the family moved up to Gove, Northern Territory. Ro moved back to Sydney to go to boarding school at MLC. She made so many friends that she has kept in contact with, and she was looking forward to her 50th Reunion next year. Ro often talked about how much she loved boarding school, after the initial homesickness, and how special it was for her to be a boarder with her big sister, Jane. Ro talked a great deal about Janey and how clever she was, and how hard it was for her following Janey at MLC as all the teachers expected Rowan to behave the same as Janey (straight As and never in trouble). Apparently, there was even an "incident" at school when Ro was made to return to Gove a week early for school holidays one year, for deeds that will remain unmentioned. This spirited behaviour certainly lasted with Ro well beyond her childhood, and was just one of the many qualities we loved about Ro.

She studied geography, economics and education at UNSW, where she realised her calling and passion for teaching. She also met Merrill, who clearly led her into a life of crime, stealing the Queen's Portrait from

(continued overleaf)

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Rowan Peterson - continued

the Moore Park Golf Club. It was returned shortly after, but Ro and Merrill were forever banned. Their lifelong friendship was forged, and it was a delight for Ro when Merrill and her family came to Norfolk to celebrate Ro's retirement.

Ro met Kim, Jess and Pete's father, when they both worked at the Coogee Bay Legion Club, and shortly after, they moved to Crescent Head, where we would learn much later that Ro's great Norfolk Island friends, Rod and Noelene, had a house. She formed many deep friendships at Crescent Head, her little gang the 'sitting ducks', whose late nights and raucous laughter filled all who heard it with love. If you heard Ro's laugh once, you would be able to find her in any crowd.

In 2001, Ro moved to Norfolk and fell in love with the place and all yorlye, and decided to stay forever. Ro met Matt, Nic and Tori, fell in love with all three and expanded her family. Pete explained it best when he said that a piece of Ro was missing until she came to Norfolk Island, and so by finding that "missing piece" she found peace and made her life here from that point on.

Ro was passionate about public education spending 40 years of her life teaching in public schools. She loved teaching and her students without reserve. She was more than a teacher. Ro's role at NICS was a social science teacher and careers advisor, both of which she took very seriously. Her love for Geography, Economics, Legal Studies and Business Studies was surpassed only by the joy she got by helping students with career choices and then assisting them to make these choices and dreams become their reality. If you completed your schooling at NICS between the years of 2001 and 2023, it is certain that your life would've been touched by Ro; she would have interviewed you at least twice, offered careers advice, and then assisted in some way to find a course that would suit you at either University of TAFE. She probably even made you watch a number of David Attenborough documentaries. Every person here today, who is 40 and under who went to Norfolk Island Central School, can attest to this, such was her impact on their lives.

She especially loved naughty students and Norfolk gave her a few, and all of whom she loved into submission. Given her previous unmentioned actions leading to her own suspension, it's possible she saw kindred spirits in all of them.

Reflecting upon her career recently, Ro declared "I never had a bad day" and what a wonderful thing to be able to say.

Ro and Matt had many plans for future travels and adventures, and while she won't be able to go on those, Ro travelled the world with all of you. She loved that you would come and visit her and share your stories with her. She lived hundreds of lives through all of you. She loved nothing more in the world than the fact that you all kept in contact and moved from students to friends, and then some of you to parents of students she taught.

Ro's brother Ric commented yesterday that as her family, they didn't get to choose Ro, they were just

so lucky and blessed to have her and love her and to be loved by her. Ro also chose to love Norfolk Island and Norfolk Island chose to love her in return. She was so much loved by her family as a daughter, sister, sister-in-law, mother, aunt, grandmother and partner. Her children, Jess and Pete, were in Ro's words, her greatest achievement, and in the past few years, she found her greatest joy being a Granny and going on new adventures with her grandchildren, sharing the old family stories and making new ones.

She would want you all to spend this time with family and friends, laughing and reminiscing on all the good times. Please share the old stories and make new ones. One of Pete and Jess' favourite stories is when Ro proudly declared "that's not how you do the Polka, this is how you do the Polka" and on standing up to show her children how to dance the polka correctly, she immediately dislocated her knee. Needless to say, neither Pete nor Jess ever found out how to do the Polka.

Ro was a lover of animals, in particular dogs and cats, and always had a pet or two (or maybe a piglet) around the house. The only outing that she managed upon arrival home last week was to visit Maisie's newborn puppies out at Beefsteak.

How can you fit a whole life into a few words? I'm sure that everybody here will have some small memory that is worthy of a mention. Whether it be just hearing her laughter while telling an over-embellished tale or some interaction you may have had at the school, or eating her artichoke dip, or drinking pink bubbles, these are all part of our memories of Ro that we will cherish.

So in celebrating and remembering our beautiful Ro, please watch the film, *The Castle*, in her honour. Raise a glass and listen for her wonderful laugh. Marvel at clouds, especially her favourites, the good old cumulus. Stop and look at rocks. Watch documentaries on plate tectonics and economics. Take an interest in rainfall, and maybe even plot the data on a climatic graph. But most of all, love each other with the same loyalty, generosity and joy all of us have experienced because we had Ro in our lives.

Thank You

The family of Ro Peterson would sincerely like to thank the community for all of their love, care and assistance during this difficult time.

There are too many people to individually name but we wish for you all to know how much we appreciate your kindness and support to our family.

Norfolk Island is truly a special place to call home. This may be one of the reasons Ro chose to make it hers.

Once again, all of our love and thanks.

Matt, Jess, Pete, Nic and Tors
