

## Order of Service

**Prelude Song and Photographic Tribute**  
"Vaya Con Dios"

**Opening Remarks**  
Michael Shreenan

**Acknowledgment of Country**  
Auntie Millie (Millie Ingram)

**RedWater Montage Volunteer Story**  
reading by Simon Shabshay

**Ross Smith 'Tour of Beauty 2016' Video**  
Clare Lewis

**Personal Remarks**  
Jose Perez, Tanya Plibersek, Brett Louat, Michael Modder

**Song dedication by REDWatch**  
"Across the Western Suburbs"

**Personal Remarks**  
Diana Whitworth, Rozita Dei Leoni, Katherine Johnston, Bill Yan

**Minute Silence and Final Dedication**  
"We Are The Champions"

**Closing Remarks**  
REV Dorothy McRae-McMahon

*Guests are also invited to gather following the services at Club Redfern (opposite Redfern station) for their own lunch, refreshments and sharing of stories.*

*The organising committee request In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board, auspiced by Counterpoint Community Services Inc. All funds raised under this campaign will be guided and utilised by Waterloo NAB in relation to projects that further advance/resource tenant participation activities. For details please contact Mike or Laura on 9698 9569 or email [info@counterpointcs.org.au](mailto:info@counterpointcs.org.au)*

# Celebration of Life



*Ross Leslie Smith*

*July 31, 1941 - October 4, 2016*

### **A life spent in service to the community - Garry Mallard**

The public housing sector mourns the loss of one of its most colourful characters, long-time Waterloo resident, advocate and activist. Ross passed away unexpectedly while on Waterloo Green in the heart of the community he loved so much. He had been running one of the many regular errands his community depended upon and appears to have passed away relatively peacefully. He was relentless in his pursuit of fair treatment for social housing tenants and worked tirelessly to give meaning to often cynical Tenant Participation processes. Ross' capacity to analyse and risk access policy on the run and in every detail was formidable. His powers of recall and his intimate knowledge of social housing history were matched by few.

Sometimes abrasive and often misjudged, Ross' commitment to his community was completely selfless and his many acts of compassion in support of the elderly and disadvantaged of his community have been too long overlooked by those who saw only the fierce and uncompromising advocate. Few have given more time and effort to the affordable housing sector and with such passion as Ross and his death is an incalculable loss to grass roots activism. Ross will be missed by community members, friends, colleagues and adversaries alike, who will draw some solace from the certain knowledge that any issues the residents of the afterlife may be experiencing right now, will be well and truly sorted by the time we arrive.

*Plenus annis abiit, plenus honoribus  
(He is gone from us, full of years and full of honours)*

## Ross

At morning tea  
he usually sat on the stairs,  
A tall man folded up, fitting  
long limbs into a narrow space.

Late evenings he often walked  
through Waterloo Green  
as my dog came down  
for its last micturition.  
'Hello', he'd say, 'Time  
you took your mother upstairs  
and made her a cup of tea'.

Morning, afternoon he was busy  
with odd jobs, scheduled meetings  
about bicycle paths,  
garden fences,  
decay spouting, inconvenient  
trees or neighbours, street lighting,  
equity for walk-ups, tenants' rights,  
and delivering the South Sydney Herald;  
a faithful man filling a generous space.

He usually wore a polo shirt,  
a blue of faded intensity,  
and he often turned scarlet  
lowering his head  
and I could hear his anger  
pawing at the ground.

It is strange and painful,  
that someone so particularly present  
can suddenly not be there.

- Catherine Skipper

## REVOLUTION

(For Ross Smith)

We loved him and he loved us  
Many topics we liked to discuss  
Identity politics, abandonment  
of the working class

He loved us and we loved him  
The way is a state of delirium  
Making our prayers  
To regain equilibrium

Revolution

We loved him and he loved us  
Reading a book by Saint Maximus  
About a time before passions,  
ignorance, illness

Revolution

He loved us and we loved him  
The state is a site of delirium  
Calling on Jesus -  
on every poor, renegade pilgrim

Revolution

Cherries for Christmas,  
A coffee to the brim  
A paper to deliver in the interim,  
Many are the things  
We hold in common,  
And we loved him

Revolution

- Andrew Collis

# ROSS

*South Sydney Community Aid, the Factory  
Community Centre, the Central Sydney  
Region Public Tenants Council, Waterloo  
Neighbourhood Advisory Board, Social  
Housing Tenant Advisory Committee,  
REDWatch, Kings Cross Community Centre*



For many years I used to be on the board of management at South Sydney Community Aid, as well as retaining an active interest. Also I've had similar roles at the Factory Community Centre; The Central Sydney Region Public Tenants Council; Waterloo Neighbourhood Advisory Board; Social Housing Tenant Advisory Committee; and others, going back 30-40 years, since I started to live in the area.

When you live in an area, you get to know people and you get involved in the area. I've associated with different organisations over that period... and you sort of get kidnapped! You become involved in the direction of them, the policies, where they're going and what they attempt to do. Also, through other associations you can get involved in policy issues, with local, state and federal government, and that sort of flows into other volunteering. In my case, I'm on the management of Kings Cross Community Centre. I was also one of the founding members of REDWatch, which is a resident action group for Redfern, Eveleigh, Darlington & Waterloo. So my experience is not entirely focussed on just one organisation, but across the broader local community.

There are some skills sets come with the course, they develop over a period of time - you can't pick a book up and become an overnight expert. What do I get out of it? It's

a community; it's a family; you're part of a structure. Call it what you like, you're part of the area that you live in. When people ask why I become involved in community work like this, I tell them that it's because I'd like to think that one day someone would help me. And why be scared? It's a community - if you have any concern for the people around you, if you'd like to have friends, be able to nod to people as you go down the street and say hello to them... it's only a small extension from that to ask them how they're feeling today and having a brief conversation with them. It's about being friendly; talking to people and relating to people. In the inner city in particular, it can be a very lonely place if you don't want to talk to people.

***So don't be scared -  
it can't bite you!***

Volunteering is your choice, as far as what you get involved in, and the degree to which you become involved...

*For more information about any of these organizations, please contact South Sydney Community Aid on 9319 4073, or The Factory Community Centre on 9698 9569*