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Family and friends, thank you for gathering here, in this quiet place, to farewell my husband, Peter John MacKenzie — Pete to almost everyone who knew him.

We come to lay him to rest, and we come to honour a life that never sought the spotlight, yet lit the way for so many of us.

We come with grief, of course.

But we also come with gratitude for sixty good, decent years, lived with purpose and with care.

Pete was born on 7 November 1965 and left us on 28 March this year, aged 60.

He grew up in Perth, son to Margaret and the late Ian, big brother to Fiona.

He studied engineering at UWA — a choice that always felt like more than a degree.

It was a commitment to building things that lasted and making things safer for the people who did the hard work.

He spent two decades in the Pilbara as a mining engineer.

The red dirt got into his boots and, I suspect, into his bones.

He knew the land, the heat, the early starts, and the responsibility that comes with heavy machinery and human lives.

Later, he moved into safety leadership, where he found his real calling: not spreadsheets or slogans, but a steady insistence that everyone knocked off and went home.

He mentored young engineers with the same patience he had for a tricky knot in the garage — practical, methodical, and always respectful.

He championed regional apprenticeships because he believed talent lives in every postcode, and because he knew that opportunity, once given, can change a life and a family.

At home, he was my husband for 31 years, my partner through every season —

the moves, the broken washing machines, the school concerts, the quiet cups of tea when the house finally went still.

He was a loving dad to our three girls — Emily, Grace and Olivia — and the proudest Pop to little Noah.

He was the son who rang his mum, Margaret, not just out of duty but because he enjoyed her company.

He was a brother to Fiona — steady, teasing in that big-brother way, and always ready with the ute when something needed hauling.

If I had to choose a single picture that captures Pete, it would be our road trip across the Nullarbor.

He insisted on detouring to every lookout, not out of restlessness, but because he didn't like to pass by and wonder what we'd missed.

At sunset he'd pull out the billy, make tea that tasted like smoke and eucalyptus, and sit in comfortable silence until the light went.

It was never a performance.

Just two people, the big sky, and a man who knew how to be present without fuss.

He had that dry wit that arrived a second after you expected it, and landed truer because of it.

He could defuse a tense toolbox meeting with one line, and he could lift our spirits at home with a raised eyebrow and a perfectly timed "Righto."

He wasn't a man to talk about values, but you never had to guess what they were.

Integrity wasn't a motto for him; it was the way he checked a report, owned a mistake, turned up early, and kept his word when it would have been easier not to.

Fairness guided the way he hired and the way he listened.

Responsibility to community showed in the hours he put into apprenticeships, in the local footy sausage sizzle, in the quiet donations no one ever heard about.

And "take care of your mates" wasn't a slogan — it was his habit, from carrying a spare esky in the ute to making the late-night call to check someone had got home.

There was also the Pete of Saturdays and early mornings.

The garage, where he turned timber into useful things with patient hands — shelves that were square, a table that still wobbles a little because he let a nervous daughter drive the final screws.

Fishing off Rottnest, content to come home with more stories than fish, and a sunburn he swore was “just a bit of colour.”

ANZAC Day dawn services, where he stood shoulder to shoulder with strangers and called them neighbours.

Evenings spent reading Australian history, pencil in hand, underlining not the grand battles, but the paragraphs where ordinary people did their jobs well.

He had a generous heart that didn't require an audience.

He gave good advice, but only when asked.

He fixed things without announcing it.

He could be stubborn — and often right — and he had a principled way of drawing a line without drawing blood.

What people will miss most, I think, is his counsel, his quiet leadership, and the sense of safety he brought to our family.

With Pete, you felt there was a plan, and if there wasn't, there would be one soon.

To Emily, Grace and Olivia — your dad was proud of you in that steady, expanding way that made room for who you really are.

He marveled at your work, your humour, your grit, and the different paths you chose.

He trusted your judgment and loved your company.

He kept every card you ever wrote him.

And to little Noah — Pop adored you.

He would have taught you how to plane a piece of jarrah straight and true, how to tie a decent knot, and how to pour tea without spilling.

We will make sure you learn all of that, and the more important things too.

To Margaret — you gave the world a good man.

His carefulness, his ~~humility, his droll humour~~ — they are recognisable gifts from you and from Ian.

To Fiona — he loved that you kept him honest and laughing, and he appreciated, more than he ever said, the way you made space for him to be the big brother without the bluster.

In the last few years, as he shifted from doing to guiding, you could see his pride in the people he'd helped along the way.

The phone calls from the Pilbara, the messages from site crews, the apprentice who sent a photo of his first pay slip and a thanks — these meant more to him than any title.

He believed leadership looked like going first into the hard conversation and last into the credit.

It is hard to say goodbye here, at the graveside, under open sky.

The earth feels very close, and words feel small.

But this is also the right place for Pete.

He loved honest work, straight talk, and a horizon you can measure by.

We commend him now to rest — a decent, well-earned rest — with gratitude for the work of his hands and the shape of his days.

Grief will come, as it should.

But so will the laughter at remembered one-liners, the taste of billy tea at sunset, the satisfaction of a joint that fits flush, the reflex to offer a hand before you're asked.

So will that feeling — in the pit of your stomach and across your shoulders — that someone steady is nearby.

He gave that to us, and it does not vanish.

If you wish to do something simple in his honour, keep an eye on your mates.

Be scrupulously fair when no one is watching.

Drink your tea hot and your opinions considered.

Visit the dawn service.

Let the apprentice have a go, and teach them how to do it safely.

And if you're driving the long road, don't skip the lookout.
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Stop.

Take it in.

Make the tea.

On behalf of our family, I also want to say this.

We invite you to share a short story about Pete at the wake.

He would have liked that — the truth told plainly, with a bit of humour.

And thank you to those who have worn a touch of navy today in his honour.

It was his quiet favourite, dependable and unfussy, like the man himself.

Pete, my love, we had thirty-one years — not all easy, never dull, and full of the kind of ordinary days that make a life.

You taught me that steadiness is a form of love.

You made our home feel safe.

You gave our girls a map for how to live with integrity and courage.

You left more behind than you took with you.

We lay you down now with respect and with love.

May the ground hold you gently.

May the wind move over you as it did on those long stretches of road.

And may we, who walk back to our cars and into our lives, carry your example with us — steady, principled, humble, and kind.

Thank you, Pete, for everything.

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