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Family, friends, colleagues, thank you for being here to honour the life of Charlotte May Henderson — Charlie to so many of us.

To Janet and Peter, to Marcus, to Elliot and Ava, and to Daniel — we hold you close today.

I speak as a close friend since high school, where Charlie became, over time, not just a mate but like a sister to me — my constant sounding board, my honest compass, the person who could turn a knot of worry into a plan and a cup of tea.

Charlie was born in Brisbane on 3 July 1985 and left us on 20 March 2026, at just forty.

Brisbane made her —

its bush tracks, its storms, its communities stitched together across the river.

She studied architecture at UQ, worked in sustainable design, and then had the courage to build her own practice in West End.

She mentored women coming up behind her, lent her voice to guest lectures on resilient housing, and helped shape bushfire-resilient design guidelines that will quietly keep people safe.

She gave pro-bono time to local shelters, because safe shelter, to her, was not a theory; it was a right.

Thoughtful and meticulous, Charlie carried a tape measure in her bag and a dry, quiet humour in her pocket.

She was a steady planner who somehow brought warmth to every room — the kind of warmth that settles people, that makes hard decisions feel bearable.

One of my favourite memories is a stormy camping trip on Straddie.

The wind tried to fold our tent in half; Charlie produced cable ties like a

magician, braced the guy ropes, and then had us laughing over damper by torchlight.

She wasn't loud about her courage —
she just got on with it, solved the thing in front of her, and made sure everyone was fed.

She loved bushwalking, the clay under her nails from the community pottery studio, live music at The Tivoli, and cheering on the Lions.

She loved Elliot and Ava with a devotion that showed up in a thousand tiny ways —
notes in lunch boxes, weekend rambles, the patience to look at a gecko twice.
And Marcus, your partnership was the work of integrity and care —
two people choosing, day after day, to build something sturdy and kind.

What defined Charlie were her values:
integrity,
sustainability as a daily practice,
generosity without announcement,
and keeping promises even when no one was watching.

What we will miss is specific and large:
her wise counsel,
the sketches she made on napkins that somehow solved thorny problems,
and those grounding hugs that could reset your day.

Today we bring native flowers only —
just as she wanted —
and we look ahead to planting a memorial tree at Mount Coot-tha.
It's right that something living will take root in her name.
She loved the words, "Do small things with great love."
That was her blueprint —
not grand gestures, but the daily, steady choices that add up to a life that holds others.

There is grief in this room, yes

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But there is also the city she helped shape,
the people she mentored who are out there drawing kinder plans,
two children who carry her steadiness and spark,
and a community made better by her quiet courage.

Charlie, thank you for every careful line you drew, every promise you kept,
every laugh you teased from a hard day.

We will honour you by doing the next right thing,
by tending to place and people,
and by choosing, as you did, small things —
with great love.

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