

PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

My father, John Gillard, passed away this morning in Adelaide.

He has battled illness in recent years but his death is a shock for me and my family.

Dad lived a long and full life. He was brought up in a coal mining village and left school at 14, but transcended these humble beginnings to become a man with a love of ideas, political debate and poetry.

Migrating to Australia in 1966, he studied for a new life in a new land and became a psychiatric nurse. For more than two decades, he showed his capacity for love and care to those most in need of help.

My father was my inspiration. He taught me that nothing comes without hard work and demonstrated to me what hard work meant as a shift worker with two jobs. He taught me to be passionate about fairness. He taught me to believe in Labor and in trade unionism.

But above all, he taught me to love learning and to understand its power to change lives. He always regretted his family background meant he had not proceeded on to higher education as a young man. He was determined that I had the opportunities he was denied.

I will miss him for the rest of my life.

I plan to travel home to Adelaide as soon as possible to grieve with my family. I ask that my family's privacy be respected at this time.

Minister Emerson will take my place in the remaining APEC forums today and tomorrow.

VLADIVOSTOK, RUSSIA
8 SEPTEMBER 2012

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