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Kia ora koutou, dear friends and whānau,

Thank you for being here for Tom, for our family, and for each other.
He asked that people wear a touch of colour today, to remember the joy in ordinary days.
Looking around, I think he'd quietly smile and nod that slow nod of his.

I'm Emma, Tom's wife and best mate for 22 years.
We built a steady, loving life together in Auckland.
We raised two good kids, Sophie and Liam, and we learned to make room for surfboards in a very small garage.

Tom was born in Palmerston North on 15 March 1976.
He grew up there with his sister Sarah, the son of Margaret and Ian, who gave him that mix of warmth and straight-up decency we all saw in him.
He studied civil engineering at the University of Canterbury, where he fell in love with the idea that you could design fairness into the world—footpaths, bridges, drains that don't fail when the clouds get mean.
He moved to Auckland, we married in 2004, and from then on he was a devoted dad, a quietly determined neighbour, and a man who kept showing up.

Tom's work was sustainable infrastructure, but he never called it that at home.
He'd say, "It's just making things safer and kinder."
He cared about cycling networks that kids could actually ride on.
He cared about local flood resilience because he'd stood ankle-deep in water on streets where people live.
Some of you know him from community meetings—the one at the school hall where he turned a shouting match into a plan, with a whiteboard, a pen, and that calm, patient voice.
He was a thoughtful problem-solver, not because he loved problems, but

because he loved people.

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At home, he was steady and unhurried.
A dependable friend to many of you, and to me the surest place to land.
He had a gentle humour that never pushed to the front of the room.
When the drill vanished for the third time, he'd just raise an eyebrow and say, "It will reveal itself."
When a storm made a mess of the backyard, he said, "Right, the garden wanted a new design anyway."
If a joke could lift the weight by five percent, he'd find it.

My favourite memories with Tom are sunrise coffees at Piha after early surf checks, both of us wrapped in hoodies, steam rising from his cup, the line of the swell just beginning to stand up out there.
We talked about everything and nothing—Sophie's science project, Liam's touch rugby draw, a council paper on culverts, whether we had enough coriander at home, the colour of the water on a cold morning.
Those talks were our anchor.
He taught me that ordinary moments tell the story best.

He loved the coast and the bush.
West coast surf when the banks were kind.
Weekend tramps in the Waitākere Ranges, where he'd walk a little slower on the way back so the conversation could catch up to our breath.
He liked home DIY—properly measured shelves, labels on jars.
He coached kids' touch rugby with the same care he brought to everything else—teaching passing lines and teamwork, making sure the quiet kid got the ball, calling time not when the whistle said, but when everyone had had a good run.

Whānau came first for Tom, always.
Fairness mattered.
Doing the right thing when no one is watching—that was his north.
He believed in looking after the whenua, not as a slogan, but in the way he

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conserved water at home, or biked to the shops, or spent his Saturdays filling sandbags when our neighbours needed them.
He didn’t talk values.
He lived them.

To Margaret and Ian—thank you for raising a son who could love so well.
To Sarah—your brother adored you; he trusted your straight talk more than you know.
To our kids, Sophie and Liam—your dad was proud of you every day, not for what you achieved, but for how you treat people.
He loved the way you listen, the way you stick up for your mates, the way you find your own path.
He’d want you to keep noticing the world—tide lines and tree roots, the way a team moves as one, the way someone’s face softens when they’re heard.

Many of you have told me what you’ll miss most—his calming presence, his gentle humour, the way he made you feel safe and heard.
I will miss those same things, and also the small, practical kindnesses: the spare phone charger he always had in his bag; the text that simply said, “Home?”; the cup of tea slid across the table during a rough patch, no speech attached.

Tom wasn’t grand about anything.
He believed in small, steady steps.
When we had hard days, he’d say, “We’ll just do the next good thing.”
I think that’s a map for all of us now.

We’ll honour him if we carry on the work he believed in, each in our own way.
Check on a neighbour when the weather turns.
Speak up at the meeting, but also listen.
Bike a bit more and drive a bit less if you can.
Coach the team.
Leave the campsite better than you found it.
And when it all feels too much, make a brew, take it to the porch, and watch the light change.

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Tom passed away on 2 April this year, aged 50.

It’s too soon, and it hurts.

But he filled his years with things that last—love, fairness, and a long list of quiet improvements you can’t put your name on.

He once told me that the best work disappears into daily life.

Safer crossings.

Drier living rooms.

Children who feel welcome on the field.

A partner who can breathe easier at the end of the day.

That’s the kind of legacy he leaves.

This morning, before we came here, I stood in the kitchen where he always put his keys in the bowl, and I could hear him moving around in the way the house has settled to his rhythm.

I made a coffee, the way he taught me—milk first, then the pour—and I watched the steam drift.

I thought of Piha and those sunrise talks, and I felt something close to peace.

He is in those places, in those habits, in us.

Thank you, Tom, for loving us without fuss.

For building a life that was strong enough to carry us now.

For choosing the long, kind path when the short one was easier.

We will keep wearing a touch of colour, like you asked.

We will keep finding joy in the ordinary days.

We will keep doing the next good thing.

Haere rā, my love.

We’ll see you in the morning light.

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