

## Vale Brian Dunnett \*

Pam Hawkins, Tony Hawkins and Beverly Symons

Brian Dunnett passed away, Saturday 18 June 2016, aged 81 in Sutherland Hospital, after a long illness.

Towards his last days he was surrounded by his family and many comrades and friends. He enjoyed their company and took pleasure in remembering old times. He displayed great dignity and courage, he knew he was not coming home and when his situation become terminal he did not want any medical intervention.

Brian was the son of a railway worker. A political and trade union activist for well over 50 years, from his early working life at the Chullora Railway Workshops, where he was a shop steward for the Electrical Trades Union, and later at the Eveleigh Workshops. He was a leading member of the Eureka Youth League in the 1950s-60s and for more than 30 years, a member of the Communist Party of Australia. He participated in the SEARCH Foundation from its formation.

Brian was always a fighter for social justice and human rights. He was opposed to corruption of any kind. He was involved in many demonstrations, particularly against the Vietnam War, and conscription. He had a strong interest in international solidarity and was particularly concerned with the mass killings of members of the PKI in Indonesia under the Sukarno Regime in 1965 and 1966.

Whilst still working on the railways, one of his proudest achievements was gaining a Post Graduate Diploma from Ku-ring-gai College, later Macquarie University. This was evidence of his perseverance, thoughtfulness and ability.

He was a keen supporter of maintaining the Eveleigh railway workshops at Redfern as a historical area.

He had a long involvement in the folk music scene and participated in many Folk Music Festivals in Canberra and elsewhere. Particularly since his retirement, a major focus was on collecting railway folk songs and

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\* A version of this was published on the *Australian Railway Songs* blog. <https://railwaysongs.blogspot.co.nz/2016/06/vale-brian-dunnett.html>

promoting railway workers' stories and music, as an important component of Australian working class history.

Brian leaves his long-time partner, Maureen Champion, his two children, Mark and Angela, and two grandchildren, Felicity and Alysha — along with a wide circle of friends associated with the railways, folk music, and left political activism, as well as in Kurnell where he and Maureen spent many happy years.

As Pam and Tony have commented, 'we have lost a comrade and friend of over 50 year's duration — we will miss him'.

We extend our condolences to his devoted family and to his many friends and comrades.

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