




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

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ADJOURNMENT

Redback Garrison

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (6.19 pm): Over the past year I have certainly picked up the vibe in this House that the adjournment debate is an opportunity to recognise the good work being done in our local communities and the state more broadly. In other words, we recognise the good guys.

Tonight, I would like to deviate a little bit from that formula and recognise the bad guys. This Saturday is 4 May, Star Wars Day. Tonight, we have in the gallery members of the Redback Garrison of the mighty 501st Legion—the world's largest and premier *Star Wars* costuming organisation that specifically costume as the bad guys, the stormtroopers, TIE pilots and other scum and villainy associated with that galaxy far, far away. Yes, I am outing myself as a *Star Wars* nerd, but I think those who heard me on ABC Radio last Star Wars Day probably already knew that.

As a child of the 1970s and 1980s, it was impossible to escape the influence of *Star Wars*. As a young girl maybe dreaming of Mark Hamill in the 1980s that gave way to a cultural cringe in the 1990s, being a geek and wielding a pretend light sabre was definitely not cool in high school back then. The release of the prequels and, finally, an income provided this *Star Wars* fan with the means to acquire the things that I never had the opportunity to have as a kid. As most people know, when I go in, I go all in. The 501st has allowed me the opportunity to travel the world and meet the people who inspired me as a child. I have trooped all over Australia and have gone to the biggest parades in California and New York. I got to meet Uncle George the Maker.

I have been a member of the 501st for 17 years. I was the first in Queensland, but now the state has over 200 members. I would like to take this opportunity to advise members of this House and the public more broadly that this is not just a geek thing to be mocked and derided. Since 2007, the Redback Garrison has raised over half a million dollars for local charities in Queensland—charities such as the Cancer Council, the Starlight Foundation, Hummingbird House, Make-a-Wish, Mates4Mates, the MS Society, the Pyjama Foundation, the RSPCA and many more.

On top of that, club members regularly visit children's wards in local hospitals and bring smiles to kids' faces when they are stuck in the wards. It is an amazing thing to see the look on kids' faces when you stick your head around the corner—the shock, surprise, delight, occasionally the fright but, overall, the joy. You cannot move for the photo opportunities. You are a genuine rock star for an hour. The simple beauty is that, with a plastic bucket on your head, no-one knows who you are.

This is a selfless group of people who bring smiles to people's faces by doing something that they enjoy. The next time people see a bunch of stormtroopers in their community events, I say to them to rock up, say 'Hi', and grab a photo. That is what they are there for. But make sure they put a gold coin in the bucket that one of them will invariably be holding. Yes, these are the bad guys, but they are bad guys doing good.