



Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**


**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Walker, Mr J

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.21 pm): I rise to acknowledge the life of someone who was not only a great man, but someone who embodied everything that is good about Ipswich and its people. John Walker was born in Ipswich on 3 September 1938 and died on 13 May this year. He grew up in East Ipswich with his sister, Wendy, and his parents, Connie and Jack. He went to Ipswich Central School and on to Ipswich Grammar School. At age 20, John was conscripted into the National Service and spent two years in the 25th Artillery Battalion, 5th Field Regiment.

John started working at his family's mine when he was 16. Beginning his working life underground, John went on to hold many roles in the mining industry. In 1993, when the mine closed, he formed a mining consulting company where he continued to provide mining workplace health and safety support until his retirement. When I say 'retirement', I use that word extremely lightly because here is a list of the things that John was involved in on a voluntary basis throughout his entire life, right up to his death.

He was an active member of the Ipswich City Uniting Church and was superintendent of Sunday school at Blair for 23 years. In addition, he served on the management committee for 39 years and was treasurer for 11 years. He was a board member of Wesley Mission from 1993 to 2007. He was also a board member of Lauriston nursing home board in 1993 and was made a life member of BlueCare nursing service.

I first met John through his involvement with Ipswich North Rotary, which he started in 1985 and where he held various positions including president, secretary and bulletin editor. He was awarded the Paul Harris Fellow in 1997 and in 2010 was awarded a Rotarian Sapphire Award. Anyone involved in Rotary will know that these two awards are very high honours.

But there is more. John was a passionate member of Habitat for Humanity, which supports vulnerable members of our community. He loved sport, especially cricket, Rugby League and Rugby Union. He also loved music and poetry and was a writer. In 2017, John published a book, *The Walkers of Aberdare—an Ipswich mining family*, which I was proud to have presented to our very own Parliamentary Library.

There is so much to say about John, but before finishing I want to mention John's friend and neighbour, Paul Casas, who gave the eulogy at John's funeral. He did such a great job and told a lot of very funny anecdotes about John's life and loves.

The main reason I want to talk about John tonight is the contribution John made in establishing the magnificent mining memorial in Limestone Park in Ipswich. John was secretary/treasurer of the Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial Trust. This is really where I came to know him through his

advocacy. He and his team were tireless and worked incredibly hard to acknowledge the 186 men and boys who died working in the mines in Ipswich over the years. It took about a decade. I was proud to support them in their endeavours and get that mining memorial up and running.

I pass my sincere condolences on to John's wife, Lynne, his daughters and to his grandchildren.  
Vale John Walker.