




Speech By
Nigel Dalton

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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PRIVATE MEMBER STATEMENT

Whittaker, Mr D

 **Mr DALTON** (Mackay—LNP) (2.28 pm): I rise today to share the story of David 'Jock' Whittaker, a man whose life of faith, humour and service touched many people in Mackay and beyond. Jock was born on 27 April 1948 in Scotland, the second child in his family. In 1961 the family took that long trip to Australia. While other children on board suffered from sunburn, Jock was safe below deck happily learning chess from the ship's lift operator—an early sign of his thoughtful and courageous nature. The family settled in Victoria. Jock struggled at school, his strong Scottish accent making lessons difficult, and so in year 8 he left to work in a furniture-making company.

Sadly, at just 16 Jock lost his father. With great determination he moved to Mildura to pick fruit and help support the family. While away his mother wrote asking whether or not he was going to church. Ever the obedient son, the following Sunday Jock went to Mildura Baptist Church. That simple act began the lifelong Christian journey that defined his ministry. Later in Geelong Jock became involved in Norlane Baptist Church teaching Sunday school and leading youth.

In 1975 he married Lyn and in 1977 he entered Bible College. Together Jock and Lyn were blessed with three children, Nathan, Simone and Joel. It was during this time that Jimmy, Jock's faithful puppet, suddenly made an appearance. For decades he was a character who entertained and taught Bible truths to children and adults alike. Ballina Baptist was Jock's first church and he served there for 13 years. He was then called to the Mackay Baptist Church. His ministry is remembered for its warmth and inclusiveness. Jock made sure that everyone felt welcome, no matter where they came from. Jimmy, the puppet, was never far away from the pulpit and even travelled on mission trips to Vanuatu, where he shared messages of hope and faith to young and old.

Jock often described a church as a bit like an airport: a place where people landed for a time, found care and encouragement and then moved on to the next stage of their journey. Jock's hope was that they would leave stronger and closer to God than when they first arrived. Perhaps Jock's favourite verse came from Matthew 12:20—

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory.

Jock believed deeply in binding up the broken-hearted. Many who arrived at his airport bruised and weary left renewed and strengthened. We miss Jock.