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Jull, Hon. David Francis

SPEECH

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Speaker Laming, Andrew, MP	Question No.

Mr LAMING (Bowman) (11:01): My mate, Jully. Among a fraternity that too rarely have friends across the chamber, there are many people who could sincerely say, 'My mate, Jully.' He was an adorable man, a father figure for me as a former federal member for Bowman. He was a man who you could walk right up to and do your best to wrap your arms around those great shoulders of his, although in his final years in this place they became more kyphotic with time. He was on his motorised scooter in the last year or so of his parliamentary service, breaking land speed records around the corridors of Parliament House until the day that he left this place.

I met David Jull when I was in grade 10. This larger than life figure arrived in my social studies class with a Mr Chittenden. Obscuring the light coming through the window was this huge figure of a man who told us all about politics. At the time, I could not think of anything worse to pursue than a life in politics. It seemed exciting, but David Jull's stories about living in a jet and being in Canberra did not engage my interest or affection. So it was almost by a fluke that this alma mater of ours—I went to the same school that Jully went to—became a factory for people on the Liberal side of politics who care about the poor, the needy and those who are repressed. Jully was one of those for sure.

Jully was a raconteur; Jully loved telling a story. The people who come here come from wide and varied lifestyles, with backgrounds from working in many different areas. But I used to be genuinely frustrated that Jully had so many extraordinary stories. He could entertain a crowd of people to the point where you did not want it to end. Being in Jully's company was to be with someone who, as I said, was larger than life. I remember him talking about his school days, when he was not always the best behaved of students. In a time when it was compulsory to wear that school uniform immaculately, he was caught out with his shirt pulled out, no hat on and a tie that was skewed to the right. Someone picked him up for it and said, 'Tell me your name and tell me who your parents are.' Quick as a whip, Jully remembered the name of his headmaster and gave that as the name of his parents. I can picture that person returning to the school and talking about this appalling student and the headmaster saying, 'Tell me who the parents are and I'll do something about it.' Jully, even then, had the last laugh.

We have already heard how Jully had a fascination with and a passion for tourism. Let us remember what this was about: it was about selling Australia. Jully came from humble beginnings, growing up in Lancewood Court in Victoria Point—a truly Australian suburb. You can picture Jully as a boy with his little bike leaning on the postbox talking to kids across the fence. He was always a networker, a talker and a sharer of ideas, and politics came naturally to him—a direct and logical step from the media, where he described himself as a television journalist with Channel 0. In that segue into politics, Jully brought with him a capacity to not only hear and retell people's stories but act to make sure that injustices were addressed. If you read David Jull's collection of speeches you will hear him at his fiery best as he fought for a third runway in Sydney prior to the Olympics. You will hear him getting involved in the Ansett and the pilot disputes and taking on former Prime Ministers Bob Hawke and Paul Keating eye to eye. Jully had no hesitation in doing that. His speeches are a wonderful read for anyone who has the time to go through the ParlInfo website.

I used to love the way Jully found the funnier side of things in many of his speeches. It became a passion of mine—as a person following on in his part of the world—to learn some of those stories about Jully, to learn about the corners he travelled in my electorate. When I was on holidays once I discovered that Jully had a favourite getaway outside of the electorate. He always kept it secret, as old-fashioned members did, but Jully's little escape was Byron Bay. In a place a little to the north there was a block of six units, and Jully went there every holiday he could to let his hair down, take off his shoes and wander around the sand dunes. I met the body corporate manager and I said to him, 'Tell me what Jully's like.' He told me exactly what Jully's almost military routine was when he was on a holiday: getting the papers, putting the feet up, having a coffee. So I said, 'Let's play a trick.' The body-corporate guy and I sat down, pulled up the phone and we gave Jully a call. I said: 'Jully, I'm down here in Byron Bay. Are you interested in buying any real estate?' He didn't let on. I said: 'Jully, I've just been wandering around with a few real estate agents. There's a place down here in Byron Bay and I've just done a builder's report on it.'

It's a heap of shit. Seriously, it's going for a song. I can pick you up an apartment here at a fraction of its market price because I've just done the building inspection. It's falling apart. There are all these structural deficits in it.' He goes, 'Wh, wh, which one, Andrew?' Of course, it was his apartment block. I said: 'Mate, it's going for a song. Let me pick you up one. I can probably get it for you for under \$100,000.' That pause was priceless. I just loved having final revenge on Jull, having uncovered where his holiday getaway was outside the electorate.

I have to confess that Jull was not a great mentor for me in Bowman, though many would have thought so, because Jull was an old-fashioned type of public figure. Jull encountered a Labor seat with an 8,500 majority and he worked hard in '74—and no-one has talked about that tough election—and got that majority back to 600 votes, which put him in the game for 1975. Too often we forget that, in this game, getting to this great place requires not just one attempt but two, and it is the people who come back a second time who are rewarded. We uncovered in David Jull a person who, after those two attempts and success on the second opportunity, went on to a career of 30 years in public life. Had he walked away in '74, it would have been a completely different story.

Figures like Snedden came up and campaigned street by street and shop by shop—as you did at a time when Bowman was not the outer metropolitan area it is now but a series of hamlets, villages and farms where people often did not know what was going on down the road. It was a true patch of country just 20 or 30 kilometres out of Brisbane, as other parts of south-east Queensland still are today. It is a very different Redlands now, but it retains that parochialism. Once this region adopted Jull, he was there for three decades. Do not forget that in those days Bowman was a seat that extended all the way into east Brisbane—a massive swathe of eastern Brisbane was Bowman as we knew it. Then matters changed and he was gradually trimmed back to the bayside and ultimately pushed south into the newly formed seat of Fadden in 1984.

Jull had a very brief stint as a minister, to which we have referred. That was in the first 18 months, looking after administrative services. David was first entangled in the difficult issue of monitoring parliamentary travel and the travel of colleagues at a time when his side had returned to government after a long period in opposition. So often these are difficult times, and David took the toughest job of all—monitoring the spending of a huge new arm of government that did not really know the rules. After 18 months he tendered his resignation in what I would describe as tragic circumstances by today's measure. At the time that was what a gentle person did in politics when they felt they bore some of the responsibility for a Public Service outcome. That is probably something that has now vanished permanently from public life in Australia.

David Jull was incredibly energised in visiting schools and he religiously attended ceremonies in the true notion of an old-fashioned parliamentarian. But David Jull also used as his personal political barometer his performance on the bay islands. These are subtropical populated islands within an hour's commute of a major city, which is what makes them unique. Macleay, Karragarra, Russell and Lamb Island—all of these islands are effectively, in addition to Coochiemudlo and North Stradbroke Island, large suburbs that just happen to be on islands and have enormous infrastructure and social challenges as a result. David could easily have won all of these elections without winning the islands, but it is important to remember that not only did he not forsake those places but he used as a barometer of his performance in public life whether he won Macleay, Russell, Karragarra, Lamb or Coochie. The one thing that David Jull could always tell you is which island he lost by five votes and how he came back and won by 20 votes next time, because, believe me, these islands do not brook fools. They are a small, tightly-knit community and, it does not matter if you are a councillor or a federal member, they look for great detail in the performance of their public representatives. David never gave up when many could have retained, and did retain, the seat.

David was a product politically, then, of the Redlands. His seat was eventually moved south and that was a great shame. When I ran in 2001 I had a chance to run next to David and, by 2004, his home of Redlands had been completely displaced from his own seat, and the seat of Fadden effectively became the buffer seat between Brisbane's bay side and the Gold Coast. I kind of felt sorry for David. He had a very, very small, humble and modest electoral office in Springwood on the side of one of Australia's busiest highways, but I think David was removed from his own roots when Fadden dragged him south. Fadden was obviously a seat where he had chosen to run, and another very significant figure in Australian political life, Con Sciacca, chose to run for Bowman and held it resolutely except for the two years between 1996 and 1998.

In many respects, one of my great regrets is that the history of Bowman in the last three years has been effectively cut short by the loss of three federal members for Bowman. A message that I know David would pass on to the last remaining, Con Sciacca, my immediate predecessor is: please, look left and right before you cross the road,

Con; you are the last remaining ex-federal member for Bowman. To have lost Len Keogh just recently and now to have lost David—and, of course, our own Liberal member as well, Andrea West—means that an enormous amount of institutional history from my part of the world has been lost.

David was remembered in a local paper with an extensive story of people who had known him. He had very, very strong and patient connections with community groups that was not always a characteristic of Liberal MPs at the time. But David had the ability to move across the political divide. David found a way as an old-fashioned parliamentarian not to play the party-political game terribly hard—that is what made him such an attractive figure down here to people on both sides of the chamber. It did not matter at what level of public life you were. It did not matter if you only met David in the shopping centre. What David will be remembered for is the furrow left behind in the hearts of so many of us by his passing—that he is no longer there for us. And those previous speakers were exactly right: we just did not see this coming and that is what makes it very, very hard for us, because there were times when we could have seen him but we did not because he did not talk about it and he just said, 'I haven't kicked the bucket yet; there's no problem with me.'

That is a lesson we will use every day and fill it with as much love and achievement and time with our family and, in a political and public life context, time with our constituents because it is an enormous privilege. It might well have been 30 years; for some of us it will only be three. But for David, in that long period, every day was one that he filled as much as he possibly could with connection and community engagement. That is a great lesson for many of us coming into this chamber because, in the progressive movement into social media and highly complex political campaigning, the role of local member can never be forgotten, and here was a person who did it so adroitly.

David Jull, you were an inspiration to many of us. We may no longer be bothered collecting boarding passes anymore or remembering registration numbers of the aeroplanes we travel on, but for the tiny things you did so well you will be remembered on both sides of this chamber.