

**STEWART McDONALD**

*Statement*

**HON DERRICK TOMLINSON** (East Metropolitan) [6.00 pm]: I rise to mark the passing of Stewart McDonald. I am sure that members on the other side of the House in particular are asking who is Stewart McDonald. Each member is indebted to one person or a group of people in our respective organisations who have supported our parliamentary careers. I have a long debt of gratitude to Stewart McDonald.

I met Stewart 20 years ago when I was the president of the Fremantle division of the Liberal Party and Stewart was the president of the Canning division of the Liberal Party. We served together on the state executive of the Liberal Party. I do not know whether it is publicly known but the 1980s were a rather interesting time, not only politically inside and outside of Parliament, but also within the Liberal Party. We were in opposition in this State. We were riven by factional rivalries. I can say that the party was in a parlous state. All political parties go through these things. For my sins I was considered to be aligned to a particular faction. I rose to become vice-president of the party. In all that time Stewart was a loyal friend who, for some reason, indicated a regard for some of the principles for which I stand.

He was an independent-minded fellow. He did not agree with a person because there was an advantage in agreeing with him; he agreed with a person because he had made a considered judgment about the person's actions. If he disagreed with someone, he would disagree vehemently. One of the great things about Stewart was that he would tell people why he disagreed with them. He would look a person in the eye and tell him why he was wrong and why he disagreed with him. He was fearless. He would tackle anybody.

I remember on one occasion going to a selection committee meeting as a delegate from the Liberal Party's state council. It was the selection committee for the seat of Dale just after Cyril Rushton had retired. I was from the Fremantle division and one of the candidates for the seat of Dale was a member of that division. Stewart was the president of the Canning division and the seat of Dale was in the Canning division. I had chaired the campaign committee for this young candidate. It was one of those seats in which a candidate was run just to test him. It was known darned well that he would lose by two to one. This candidate performed credibly in that situation and was bitten by the political bug. He wanted to become a member of Parliament and so he applied to contest the seat of Dale. Stewie made the judgment that because the candidate was from the Fremantle division I would support him as a delegate from state council. As I walked into the room Stewie turned around to the delegates and said, "Well, one thing's clear: we don't want any outsiders taking this seat." The outsider did not win the seat and neither did I support him for it. I thought he would be better served somewhere else. It turned out that Fred Tubby received endorsement for the seat of Dale at that by-election, and the seat eventually became Roleystone. After February 19, it will become the seat of Serpentine-Jarrahdale, will it not, Leader of the House?

Stewie contracted leukaemia about five years ago, and it was thought that he would have a short terminal illness. People felt that Stewie's life should not pass without some recognition of what he had done. He was very active not only in the Liberal Party, but also in the community. I do not know how many organisations Stewie was active in. Such people are the lifeblood of a community: if a job needs to be done, they get in and do it. That was Stewie. He was very involved with community orders in which people are sentenced to a number of hours' community service. Stewie organised this out in the Gosnells district. He spent the entire weekend working with people he called "My crims". He would say, "I'm going to meet my crims." In fact, much of the work clearing the Canning River, for example, behind the Gosnells Civic Centre was done by Stewie and his "crims". I think the Gosnells Civic Centre was to be opened today, but I do not know whether the Premier arrived as I had to leave before he got there. Fortunately, those people who rallied to ensure that Stewie was recognised succeeded and Stewie became a member of the Order of Australia.

He fought his illness. He was not going to let leukaemia beat him. Regrettably, six months ago he contracted stomach cancer. He told his friends not to bother going around to see him as he was going home to die. Stewie passed away last night.

It is only fitting that I express publicly my gratitude to a fine gentleman who supported my political career both inside and outside Parliament. I have that debt of gratitude to him. The Liberal Party has a debt of gratitude to him. More importantly, the entire community of Gosnells has lost a fine citizen. It is appropriate that *Hansard* records his passing.

*House adjourned at 6.07 pm*

---