

MEMBER FOR YOKINE

Resignation from Australian Labor Party — Personal Explanation

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine) [4.10 pm]: It is with a deep sense of regret and disappointment that I have tendered my resignation from the Australian Labor Party, effective from midnight, 19 May 2008. I intend to remain in Parliament as an Independent member for the Legislative Assembly seat of Yokine. It is clear that the state branch of the Labor Party no longer sees that I have a future role. Therefore, I feel it only right that I take my principles with me and sit on the Independent benches for the remainder of this term, whilst I contemplate what I should do for the most important people in this equation—those who elected me to represent them. In the meantime, and in the future, I am determined to make sure that they are not taken for granted.

The continued support of my family, and in particular my wife, Susan, is a joy, as is the absolute loyalty and support my staff have shown me during the past months. They are also loyal Labor Party members, so it has become increasingly difficult for them, especially when their future with the Labor Party, and in some cases their continued employment, has been challenged, should I stand as an Independent, and they choose to remain with me.

To many in this place, politics is seen as simply a game. To me it is a privilege to be earned and guarded jealously. If we allow the twin notions of local electorate representation and the acceptance of responsibility by elected members, particularly ministers of the Crown, under a democratic Westminster system to be undermined, then we threaten the very fabric of our society. The various revelations during the past 12 to 18 months have demonstrated that there is cause for concern.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I thank you for your understanding in this matter and the assistance of all parliamentary staff, in particular Peter McHugh, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, as I embark on the next phase of life's colourful journey. May I leave a number of my Labor colleagues with the words of Martin Luther King —

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.