

MICHAEL BOWMAN - MEMORIAL

Statement by Member for Yokine

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine) [12.53 pm]: As the patron of the Welsh Society of Western Australia, I wish to acknowledge a selfless lifelong act of Australian mateship that celebrates the short life of Michael Bowman, a young Welsh migrant who was tragically killed 50 years ago on the opposite side of the world from his green Welsh valleys. On 15 December 1955, 53 youngsters from Clontarf Boys Town were on their way to an annual Christmas holiday when their bus collided with a truck on the South Western Highway, killing 12-year-old Michael instantly and injuring 19 other boys in the horrific smash. Michael's best mate David Crisp, who now lives in Northam, and Michael's twin brother Richard Bowman had missed the bus. The three boys were orphans and had met when they were babies at an orphanage in Swansea, Wales. They were brought to Clontarf as child migrants in 1952. Richard never recovered from his twin brother's death and died in 1966. David Crisp left Clontarf when he was 15 and became a successful shearer throughout the wheatbelt. He never forgot his best mate Michael or that he had died without a family to mourn him and without his mate and twin brother.

As reported by Peter Sweeney in the *Sunday Times* recently, David fulfilled a lifelong dream when he unveiled a marble memorial to his best mate and all their friends at the site of the tragedy in Serpentine, so far from the land of their fathers, the land of song and their native Wales. David Crisp researched, commissioned and paid for the memorial himself. It is an act of true Australian mateship. When he unveiled the plaque by removing a Welsh flag, David said that Mike had died in a part of the world that was like Wales where there are green hills and running streams. I have never met David Crisp, but I acknowledge his selfless act and thank him for bringing a final sense of "heddwch" - peace - to the memory of his mate and fellow Welshman, Michael Bowman.