



Speech by

## Barbara Stone

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

Hansard Tuesday, 10 February 2009

---

### VICTORIAN BUSHFIRES AND NORTH QUEENSLAND FLOODS; ROZIS, MS R

**Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (10.00 pm): Firstly, let me begin by passing on my condolences to the families who have lost loved ones in the Victorian bushfires and Queensland floods. There really is a sense of sadness, a feeling of being glum that has come over all of us and it can be felt throughout our communities. Those who have been affected by these tragic events are in our hearts and prayers.

The Springwood ALP branch is also grieving, for it has lost one of its members. Born in Martley, Worcester, England on 4 August 1946, the second of three daughters to Eleftherios and Francis Michael, Margaretta—or Rita as she was known to all—departed this life on 23 December 2008, aged 62 years. At her all-girls school, Rita loved to play cricket and was regarded as a bit of a tomboy—a description that suited her all her life. After leaving school at age 15, Rita took a job in the office of Cadbury's in Birmingham. Apparently, she was known as the world's worst chocolate taster because, although she was not supposed to be anywhere near the assembly line, she managed to stray down there quite frequently and sample every product. For those of us who knew Rita, that does not come as any surprise for we know that Rita was never daunted by the rules. Rita also spoke her mind and patience was never one of her virtues.

It is well known to us that in the United Kingdom, at the age of 25, Rita was heard to say, 'If this fellow gets elected, I am going to Australia!' He was elected and she did migrate to Australia in 1971. In 1973, Rita met Tony Rozis on a bus on a skiing holiday in the Snowy Mountains. They were attracted to each other immediately and Rita announced to her flatmate, 'He'll do me!' Rita and Tony were married in 1977 after the bank manager told them that they had to be married to obtain a home loan. Their first child, Ellen, was born in 1979 and in 1982 their son, Alex, was born.

Rita was very proud of her family. She was very protective of them. Their fights were her fights. She was also very passionate about workers' rights. Rita was very proud of Tony and his work with Energex and she would fiercely defend their work to anyone who had a complaint. She always wanted a better deal for the workers. Rita was extremely proud of her two children. Anyone and everyone she met were all told 'My Ellen, she's doctor' and she would tell us how wonderful Alex was with IT and at fixing things.

Rita and her family settled in Shailer Park in 1987. She became involved in the P&C at Kimberley Park State School. She was very vocal when it came to local issues and she would always take up the fight. Rita was always interested in politics and joined the Springwood branch of the Australian Labor Party, where she was an active and vocal member, serving as treasurer for 10 years. Rita loved participating in Labour Day marches and preparing for elections—recruiting volunteers and handing out how-to-vote cards. As soon as the last election was called, Rita was out hammering 'Barbara Stone for Springwood' signs all over the electorate. I think it was the tomboy coming out in her.

This is an election year and when it is called the Springwood ALP branch will really notice that they are missing a 'branchy'. To her family, we say thank you for sharing her with us. We share in your grief and you are in our thoughts and prayers. Rita was always offering assistance to family and friends. She did all this unconditionally. When people wanted to repay her, she would respond with the words, 'Just say "Thank you, Rita."' I simply say, 'Thank you Rita. May you rest in peace.'