

RON GOMBOC

Statement

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan) [10.11 pm]: Tonight I rise to pay tribute to an internationally recognised Western Australian sculptor. I do so because through his works he has been able to take sculpture from the state onto the world stage. I believe that this gentleman has made a contribution to his craft and his art not only in this state but also right around the world. Tonight I rise to make comments in relation to the contribution of Ratimir Marijan (Ron) Gomboc.

Many members would recognise Mr Ron Gomboc as being the proprietor, with his lovely wife Terrie, of the famous Gomboc Gallery. Many people would not know that Ron Gomboc was born on 6 November 1947 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He migrated to this state at the age of 13 with his family. He took up an apprenticeship in his father's woodworking and building business between 1961 and 1968. He was then called up for national service in the Australian Army. He served in the Royal Australian Engineers from 1969–71 and received national service medals.

Ron's part-time art studies commenced at Claremont School of Art whilst in the Army. After his discharge from the Army, Ron continued part-time study of sculpture and printmaking at Perth Technical College, as well as painting and drawing at Midland Tech with none other than the great Western Australian artist, Guy Grey-Smith. There is no doubt that there would have been some amazing synergies between Ron Gomboc, the sculptor, and Guy-Grey Smith, the famous Western Australia artist.

Ron's achievements have been recognised and acknowledged through many awards—in fact there are too many to list here. However, I want to give recognition to the fact that the Centenary Medal for "Outstanding commitment to the community in raising the awareness of art" was presented to Ron in 2003. Ron and Terrie received the ArtsWA tenth anniversary commemorative lifetime commitment award and the West Australian state arts sponsorship scheme awards in 2003. In 2010 Ron became a member of the *Sculpture by the Sea* decade club for having exhibited 10 times at SxS Bondi exhibitions. Over a 35-year career Ron has had numerous exhibitions, both solo and group shows, including in Singapore, Austria, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria and Slovenia. He has had three exhibitions in Paris. He was selected to represent Australia as artist-in-residence at the steel sculpture symposium in Beijing, China; artist-in-residence at Asago Museum sculpture park in Japan; lecturer-in-residence at LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore by invitation of the Ministry of Culture, Singapore; guest lecturer at Salzburg summer art academy, Austria; and the list goes on. In 2011 Ron was invited to represent Australia in South Korea at the Goyang Sculpture Park artist-in-residence symposium.

When I look through this marvellous book that provides a pictorial history of Ron Gomboc's work, I have to say that the quality of the design and artwork is outstanding. Much of Ron Gomboc's work is commissioned work; for example, *Growing Together* in 2006, which is an absolutely magnificent piece of sculpture; *Journey* in 2001; *Together* in 2009; a Vincorp commission in 2009; an SBF commission in 2008; and the list goes on.

Ron Gomboc clearly has an eye for his chosen craft and there is no doubt that he has put the Swan Valley on the map, because it is in the Swan Valley that he operates his studio and gallery, which nestles in a four-and-a-half-acre piece of land and is at one with its natural surroundings. Ron Gomboc has put not only the Swan Valley, but also Western Australia on the map. I have to say how pleased I am that Ron Gomboc, together with his wife Terrie, have done so much through their contribution to this state. Here in WA, Ron's work can be seen in many places, including public collections; for example, of the Town of Cottesloe, the Cities of Swan, Melville and Wanneroo and the Town of Port Hedland. It can also be seen at the University of Western Australia, Curtin University and Edith Cowan University, and at high schools, grammar schools and hospitals. It can be seen in the eastern states, overseas in Japan, the Sultanate of Oman, China, Slovenia, Singapore and Bulgaria, just to name a few places, because there are so many places where Ron either has done his work in Western Australia and taken it over to its final exhibition place or has been commissioned to undertake the work in other parts of the world. Given the contribution of this marvellous Western Australian, his achievements should be put on the public record and, as the member for the East Metropolitan Region, it gives me great pleasure to be able to do that.

Ron Gomboc is currently completing a commission of six steel sculptures for the Fortescue Metals Group and also a sculpture as the main award for the Australian Film Industry awards in November this year. He is indeed a very busy man. He is a proud Western Australian. He is a Western Australian of whom we can all be proud because of his amazing contribution to the state and because he is one of nature's finest gentlemen.

House adjourned at 10.18 pm
