



Former MLA a champion of WA farming

■ Malcolm Quekett

When Sandy Lewis gave his first speech as a Liberal MP in 1973, there could only have been one topic he wanted to raise — WA's agricultural industries.

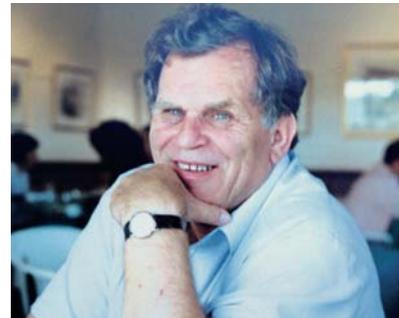
Mr Lewis had been a jackeroo, farmer and farm machinery businessman, and he told the Legislative Assembly in his maiden speech that agriculture was in good shape but could be even better if it was marketed and promoted well.

With uncanny foresight, he told the Lower House that if this was done, Australia would be able to supply the ready markets "on its doorstep in South-East Asia" for years to come.

But his advocacy for the bush came to an end on Monday when he died aged 85 in South Australia, where he was born.

Mr Lewis went to St Peter's College in Adelaide and then Adelaide University, before moving to WA.

He married Patricia Symons in 1955 and after working on the land he bought a farm machinery business in Boyup Brook and became actively involved with the Liberal Party. Elected as the MLA for Blackwood at a by-election in December 1972, Mr Lewis transferred to an Upper House seat as MLC for Lower Central Province in 1974, which he held until 1989.



Vale: Sandy Lewis

He sat on many select committees, including being chairman of inquiries into national parks, the Department of Conservation and Land Management, and also headed a bushfire review committee.

Well into his retirement years Mr Lewis was an active member of Locals Against Wildfire, lobbying for better fire management.

After politics, he became the first State secretary of the Farm Machinery Dealers Association, staying in the role from 1997 to 2003.

His daughter Bronwyn said her father had entered politics to make a difference, loved his family, was an extremely loyal person and stood up for the underdog.

Mr Lewis is survived by Bronwyn and his second wife Tricia.

A memorial service will be held at St George's Cathedral at 10.30am on June 3.