

**HMAS SYDNEY II**

*Statement*

**HON STEVE MARTIN (Agricultural)** [9.51 pm]: I rise to recognise that Saturday, 19 November, was the eighty-first anniversary of the sinking of HMAS *Sydney II*. That was the most grievous loss ever suffered by the Royal Australian Navy. The cruiser HMAS *Sydney* was lost in action in 1941, along with the German auxiliary cruiser *Kormoran*, off the Western Australian coast. None of HMAS *Sydney*'s complement of 645 men survived. As I have said, the *Kormoran* was also sunk in that action.

Lara Dalton, the member for Geraldton, and I as members of Parliament were among the very fortunate invited guests to the eighty-first commemorative sunset service at the HMAS Sydney II Memorial in Geraldton. As members of Parliament, we are very fortunate to be invited to participate in all sorts of very special events, but I have to say that this memorial was very special. I will cherish having had the privilege of laying a wreath at that memorial.

We were reminded by the emcee of that event, Warren Nathan, of what the laying of the wreath involves. It is to commemorate and remember the 645 souls who were lost. Hon Sandra Carr will know that the view from the top of Mt Scott of the ocean and surrounds makes the memorial a very special place. I recommend to those members who have not seen the memorial that they get there. From the dome of the souls, which comprises 645 stainless steel seagulls, to the statue of the waiting woman, to the remembrance pool, to the 645 names on the granite plaque behind the area, and to the firing of the cannon at sunset, it was a very special and poignant event.

I would like to also mention the commander of HMAS *Sydney V*, Andrew Hough, who gave a moving address to those of us who were gathered at the event on Saturday night. Congratulations also to the local schools, the City of Geraldton, the local Returned and Services League of Australia, the local veterans and the representatives of our Armed Forces who helped make this a very special event. I would also like to make special mention of the outgoing warden of the memorial, Don Rolston. He has done a wonderful job as the custodian of that place in Geraldton. I also want to congratulate Commander Spike Jones on taking on that role. He has some very big shoes to fill.

I will close by quoting the naval ode. Most of us are familiar with the ode that is read at Anzac Day services and Remembrance Day. There is a very touching part of the naval ode that is added to that. It starts with the words —

They have no grave but the cruel sea,  
No flowers lay at their head,  
A rusting hulk is their tombstone,  
Afast on the ocean bed.

Thank you.