

Adjournment Motion (by Mr Gentleman) proposed: That the Assembly do now adjourn.

Mr Bogey Musidlak

MRS DUNNE (Ginninderra) (3.57): I want to pause tonight to reflect on the life of Boguslaw, known as “Bogey”, Musidlak. Bogey died suddenly on 27 August. As he was a long-term Canberra resident, I think it is appropriate that this Assembly notes his passing, as we all owe our election to his vision and foresight.

As Malcolm Mackerras said in a recent obituary, Bogey was the father of Hare-Clark in Canberra. Bogey was the president for many years of the [Proportional Representation Society](#), an organisation which has come about to further the use of the single transferable vote. The eyes of many members will glaze over, but the single transferable vote is a very important thing. It is used most commonly in Australia, more commonly in Australia than anywhere else in the world, and it does produce very fair electoral systems. Malcolm Mackerras’s obituary, and also Malcolm Baalman’s online obituary earlier this month, spoke warmly of the importance of the work that was done by Bogey Musidlak in promoting proportional representation and the single transferable vote in Australia and specifically in Canberra.

Bogey was born in September 1953, and he came to Canberra as a resident in 1976. He had a Polish father and a Ukrainian mother, who met in a prisoner-of-war camp during World War II. For those who knew Bogey—I knew him well, and my husband, Lyle, also knew him well; he worked very closely with him during the 1992 Hare-Clark voting system referendum—Bogey was an unusual character. He was a bit of a hoarder but entirely driven. During the electoral system referendum, his effort and drive were the principal things that saw Hare-Clark become the preferred electoral system in the ACT.

When there was discussion in 1991 about whether we should change the electoral system, the options that were put forward were Hare-Clark and single-member electorates. At the time when it was first mooted, the *Canberra Times* reported that its poll had shown that there was 25 per cent support for the Hare-Clark electoral system in the ACT, but by the time of the referendum in February 1992 74 per cent of Canberrans had voted for Hare-Clark. This, which has been described by Malcolm Mackerras as the miracle of Canberra, was mainly the work of Bogey Musidlak.

But 1992 did not see the end of his work. When the first draft electoral bill came out, following the referendum, there were attempts by Labor to hijack the election result with a proposal for above-the-line voting, which is the antithesis of the single transferable vote. I recall quite vividly a Geoff Pryor cartoon that appeared in the *Canberra Times* of Rosemary Follett and her crew scrumming around on the floor looking for something in a very concerned way. The commentary was, “Rosemary is looking for her credibility.”

Of course, this attempt to hijack the referendum result fired Bogey up, and he hatched a plan for an entrenchment of the elements of Hare-Clark. In the next election, in 1995, there was again a referendum, which resolved to entrench the essential elements of Hare-Clark into ACT legislation so that they could not be done away with without a two-thirds majority of this place or by referendum. The elements of a single transferable vote, odd numbers, no less than five in each electorate and various other elements of Hare-Clark are entrenched today and are safeguarded today because of the work of Bogey Musidlak.

It is important that this Assembly notes his early and sudden passing and thanks him for the work that he has done for the people of Canberra and for democracy in Canberra.

MR STEEL (Murrumbidgee) (4.02): I too would like to rise and, on behalf of the government, mark the passing of Bogey Musidlak, a great member of the Canberra community and expert in electoral reform. He died at the age of 63. Through his career, Bogey worked for the Department of Finance and was chief of staff to Australian Democrats Senator David Vigor.

We in this place are all here because of the electoral system that Bogey championed. Bogey was widely known for his intelligence and his expertise on electoral systems. He played an integral part in the ACT adopting the Hare-Clark system that we know and love. He influenced all sides of politics in the early 1990s, as the ACT adopted Hare-Clark, in a role that in this place led Mrs Dunne to give him the nickname “Mr Proportional Representation for the ACT”.

Bogey's encouragement and determination for a fair electoral system spearheaded two successful public ballots. The first ballot, in 1992, was an advisory poll which showed that 65 per cent of Canberrans agreed with the Hare-Clark proportional representation system being used to elect MLAs rather than having 17 single-member divisions each being won by the dominant party. Three years later, the second ballot, a binding referendum, brought into law the Hare-Clark entrenchment bill, which the then Assembly passed under the provision of commonwealth legislation. In campaigning for a yes vote, Bogey was rewarded with another 65 per cent success rate. As a result, all of us in this place are very familiar with the intricacies of Hare-Clark. Since the introduction of Hare-Clark in the ACT, Bogey has been a regular commentator on electoral reform. He held the position of president of the Proportional Representation Society of Australia.

Aside from electoral systems, Bogey was influential in population health policy. He championed a range of anti-smoking policies, including ensuring that people no longer smoke on aeroplanes, through the group Canberra Action on Smoking and Health. Bogey was a dedicated, charming and passionate Canberran. He influenced democracy in Canberra and we owe him a great deal in that regard.