

Artist's Statement

**Stand Up – Speak Out**  
**A Memorial to Theo Sidiropoulos**

(b. 1924 – d. 1998)

Artist: Jenny Steiner

2007

The members of the Theo Sidiropoulos Trust and the City of Yarra's brief requested a memorial "contemporary in nature and designed in a manner which encourages contemplation of the contribution of multicultural communities in Yarra". I am humbled but proud that my work 'Stand Up – Speak Out' was chosen out of several submissions from a field of distinguished artists.

In designing such a conceptual piece, my primary objective is to capture the *essence* of the person. By bringing together key elements of his life through symbolic references in design, a picture is drawn of the man. Perhaps not a literal picture of his likeness but one that tells a complete story when looked at as a whole piece - one that tells the story of his life, who he was, what he stood for and the people he touched; what he meant to you.

The memorial reflects aspects of Theo's personal and political life. It is symbolic of a speakers' mound, a place where all people can have their say and be heard. The use of strong, natural materials such as stone and timber, and the use of steel, expresses Theo's strength of character and unpretentious nature. The diversity of languages is a sign of Theo's support and connection to migrant communities. Theo's own cultural heritage is represented by the backgammon elements in the seat design and the Greek key pattern of the timber railway sleepers. His determination - despite his broken English - is symbolised by the broken line in the bluestone seat. The bluestone itself represents the foundations of home in a new land. The shape is based on the feeling of displacement - migrants often feel like a square peg in a round hole. The red carnation signifies passion and also final respects.

Not simply a place for adoration, but a gift from Theo Sidiropoulos to the people. He stood up and spoke out for many, now he invites you to use the space in reflection and contemplation but also to inspire action. Write your own speeches, stand up for yourselves – he showed you how. Follow his lead.