

Tributes for Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations co-chair Stefan Romaniw

Matthew Guy and Bill Shorten have spoken of the legacy of “irreplaceable” activist Stefan Romaniw after his sudden death in Poland.

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Stefan Romaniw has been remembered as ‘a giant man with a giant heart’.

A former state multicultural boss and prominent Ukrainian community leader has been remembered as an “irreplaceable” activist.

Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations co-chair [Stefan Romaniw](#) has died in Poland after attending a conference in nearby Lithuania.

Mr Romaniw, 68, was also the First Vice President of the Ukrainian World Congress.

He was a fierce activist opposing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and had spoken at the World Congress of the Anti-Imperial Peoples’ Bloc in the Lithuanian city of Kaunas.



Mr Romaniw was a fierce activist opposing Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Picture: David Geraghty

It is understood that he collapsed at Warsaw Airport this week and was put into an induced coma from which he did not recover.

Mr Romaniw was a former chairman of the Victorian Multicultural Commission and was respected by all sides of politics for his passionate commitment to ethnic communities.

Former state Opposition leader Matthew Guy, who has Ukrainian heritage through his mother, said that Mr Romaniw was "genuinely irreplaceable".

"Everyone is heartbroken. It was an honour to have known him," he told the Herald Sun.

Mr Romaniw was also close to senior Labor figure and federal Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme of Australia Bill Shorten who regularly attends Ukrainian community rallies against the Russian invasion.

"Vale Stefan Romaniw. He was a giant man with a giant heart whose sudden shocking loss will leave a giant hole in the lives of his beloved family and his Australian-Ukrainian community," Mr Shorten said.

“Stefan and I met many years ago in my local Essendon community but even more so in the aftermath of the MH17 tragedy. Over the years we became strong friends and I was in awe of his advocacy, fight and passion for his community.

“He is irreplaceable. The world is a smaller place. I promise to keep fighting for his cause of a free Ukraine.”

It is believed there is a push on for Mr Romaniw to have a state funeral.