

NURSING SERVICE MEDAL

Statement

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [6.40 pm]: This morning I was pleased to table a petition supporting the issuing of service medals to our nurses and midwives. It is my understanding that many of our first responders, such as police and ambos, are already officially recognised in this way. I am sure that there is some good reason why nurses and midwives do not receive a service medal, but I am not aware of any reason at this stage. I am sure it is not because of any resistance to the fact that they do a good job, because I am sure they do. There is plenty of merit in a service medal for our nurses and midwives.

To be fair, though, I do expect that there is more of an issue with nurses and midwives, given that they usually work for multiple employers throughout their working lives, and that might create some issues. I am also aware that there may be some federal implications in this as well.

I am aware that a number of individuals have led in this space. A gentleman by the name of Paul Walling and a team of others have taken it upon themselves to recognise the dedication and service of many of our nurses and midwives in this state. Because of their hard work, all of which is on a voluntary basis, a number of events have taken place at which ceremonies have been conducted to celebrate our wonderful nurses and midwives in this state.

In May 2017, Tony Buti, MLA presented 38 service medals at an event in Kelmscott. These nurses and midwives had provided a combined total of 1 088 years of service to this state. One individual from Collie had completed 57 years of service. In September 2017, at another event in Kelmscott, 42 medals were presented, recognising a total of 1 244 years of service, with the highest individual celebrating 56 years of service. In October 2017, at an event held in Bunbury, Don Punch, MLA presented a further 84 medals, representing 2 544 years of service. A lovely lady by the name of Irene Farmer from Narrogin topped the billing with 50 years of service. In March 2018, at an event held in Maylands, Simon Millman, MLA presented 51 medals, representing 1 595 years of service. The longest serving there was 57 years. In May 2018, at another event held in Bunbury, Minister Murray presented 47 medals, representing 1 305 years of service. The longest serving there was 44 years. In September 2018, at an event in my own electorate, I was lucky enough to present 45 medals, with a combined total of 1 123 years of service. One of the recipients I met was Rosemary Lorrimar from Armadale, who had completed 57 years of service.

To date, 307 nurses and midwives have had their service to our community unofficially recognised with a service medal. Their average service was 30 years. All this has been achieved through the voluntary hard work of Paul Walling and his team. Surely it is not beyond us all to follow their lead and officially recognise the work of these wonderful people whom we all turn to in our hour of need.