

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Dr Brad Pettitt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Sophia Moermond

DR CHRISTINE (CHRISSEY) SHARP

Condolence Motion

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [2.04 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house expresses its deep regret at the death of Hon Dr Christine (Chrissy) Sharp, a former member of the Legislative Council for the South West Region, and places on record its appreciation for her long public service, and tenders its profound sympathy to her partner and members of her family in their bereavement.

I want to start by acknowledging the family, friends and colleagues of the former member who are in the galleries today, including former members of Parliament Bill Thomas, Hon Cheryl Davenport and Diane Evers.

I served with Chrissy—which is how I am going to refer to her from now on—in my first term in this place. I found her to be friendly, intelligent, hardworking and committed to achieving practical outcomes in the policy matters that mattered to her. I did observe that if you crossed her or if you did something she considered very unreasonable, she would let you know in no uncertain terms. It took a while to get Chrissy to that point, but once she was at that point, she would let you know how she was feeling about what you were doing.

Hon Chrissy Sharp was born in London in 1947. The daughter of Alfred and Phyllis, she was educated at Bishopshalt School in England before studying at the University of Sheffield, achieving a Bachelor of Arts with honours, and the University of Kent, achieving a Master of Arts. Chrissy arrived here in Western Australia in 1973 after a lengthy period travelling the world and having experiences that no doubt benefited her later on. She has been described by many as a deep thinker. Chrissy would go on to complete her PhD at Murdoch University on the politics and ethics of logging old-growth forests.

In preparing my comments for today, I spoke to Louise Pratt, who is now Senator Louise Pratt. Louise and I started at the same time and we sat about there in the chamber. Louise served with Chrissy on the environment and petitions committee—that is, the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. Louise said that she learnt a lot from observing the way Chrissy chaired that committee, and that Chrissy would bring people, communities and scientists together and make sure that everybody was heard. On GM in particular, Louise observed that Chrissy worked closely with the late Kim Chance; although Louise did say that she noted what she described as woolly moments between the two of them as Chrissy continued to push the negotiations.

Chrissy's community activism, particularly on environmental issues, led her to achieve much across her life. During the mid-1970s, Chrissy was active in several campaigns to oppose woodchipping, save the Shannon River basin and oppose the expansion of bauxite mining in jarrah forests. The passion that she was most known for was the campaign to save native forests. It was through those campaigns, I am told, that she met her partner, Andrew, and they eventually moved to Balingup in 1977 and started a tree farm that they called Small Tree Farm.

Aboriginal issues were also at the forefront for Chrissy throughout her career. Her job as a journalist for the ABC found her covering the infamous Skull Creek incident. Her investigation and coverage of this incident was influential in prompting a Western Australian royal commission into the police treatment of Aboriginal people. Later, while serving in this house, she seconded a motion from the Leader of the Opposition that this house should apologise to the Indigenous people of Western Australia.

Between 1983 and 1985, Chrissy sat on the Donnybrook–Balingup shire council. She was a member of the South West Development Authority's advisory committee. In 1989, she was the first woman to be appointed as a member of the Environmental Protection Authority, retaining her membership until 1994 when she resigned to concentrate more on the tree farm.

Chrissy was also a founding member of the WA Greens when the party was formed in the early 1990s. She described running for Parliament for the Greens as being risky business, but in May 1997 she was elected to the Legislative Council as a member for the South West Region, a position she would hold for two terms.

By her own admission, Chrissy based her approach to politics on the phrase used by another Greens senator, Christabel Chamarette, and that phrase was: "Doing politics differently." In reflections written by her in 1999, Chrissy said that she was a great fan of the way that Christabel did politics, working with integrity on each issue. With the Greens holding the balance of power at the time, this approach proved very effective. It was so effective that later she would remark —

For eight years almost every issue I touched moved ground and when you can sense that you make a difference, it is hard to refuse issues. As my reputation for being reasonable and effective grew I became more and more inundated with requests for help. I was juggling processes on dozens of political issues

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Dr Brad Pettitt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Sophia Moermond

at any one moment ... My first thought when I finished in May 2005 was “thank God I didn’t crash any issue—now I can collapse!”

This insight goes to not just her effectiveness or capacity, but also her considerable work ethic and drive for positive change on a number of matters. In another reflection on her approach to politics, Chrissy explained her proudest moment, saying —

In 2002 I was introduced by Norman Moore, the then Leader of the Liberal Opposition in the Upper House, to Sir Charles Court, with the recommendation “Chrissy is a politician of integrity, Sir Charles.” What touched me most about those words was the irony that years earlier I was Charlie’s most irritating opponent. I treasure the thought that even when those in opposition disagreed with my positions, or thought I was too idealistic, they could still respect me.

A former colleague of mine in this place, Hon Giz Watson, made the following comments about Chrissy’s political style —

She would consider her opponents and wasn’t quick to condemn anyone. She did a lot of work behind the scenes and was recognised as being able to work with people across political divides. She would consider the issues and this approach led to great respect for her. And it’s an approach we would hope for in the best of politics. She was also a formidable opponent and some people found her a little intimidating.

I have it on good authority from Giz that at Chrissy’s funeral, the comment was made that even former Premier Colin Barnett had admitted he found her “rather terrifying”. She was clearly respected by all. In many ways ahead of her time, Chrissy would often emphasise the importance of women in politics. I am advised that on one notable occasion, Chrissy put together a coalition of three women from three parties—Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich from the Labor Party, Hon Helen Hodgson from the Democrats, and Chrissy herself—to put together more than 200 amendments to the School Education Act. In a formidable demonstration of three women from different parties working effectively together, most of those 200 amendments were accepted by the Minister for Education at the time, Hon Colin Barnett—I do not want anyone else to get any ideas of that nature!

Chrissy introduced into this house five private members’ bills on a range of issues during her time, including environmental protection, cannabis reform, wildlife conservation and land clearing. She was the first woman to chair a standing committee in the Western Australian Parliament—astonishing, really, when you think about that now—and that was the Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development. She was also a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. Both those committees were hugely active. They tabled a range of reports on various environmental and other issues that led to real change.

Another former member of this house, Hon Tom Stephens, provided the following remarks on Chrissy’s tireless advocacy for environmental affairs. He said —

Chrissy brought her environmental pre-occupations and put them centre stage in her many contributions to the debates in the house. She helped to shift the needle on the dial when it came to thinking about how to have a sustainable economy that showed genuine respect to the environment.

Towards the end of her parliamentary career, Chrissy was able to see the culmination of some of her life’s work of protecting the forests, when 853 000 hectares was added to the WA forest reserve—a significant milestone.

I want to go back to some further reflections about Chrissy given to me by Giz, who beyond many others saw firsthand the impact that Chrissy had. Giz says —

My main recollection of working with Chrissy was that once she turned her mind to something she stuck with it and she was dogged. Her committee work demonstrates the success there. She was a very strong willed person who thought very deeply about issues that she was fighting for. She was one of the people I really enjoyed working with because of her breadth of knowledge and the intensity she took to all issues. She was tenacious and passionate. She was not afraid to stand her ground. She gave it her all and she was key to the protection of large chunks of the state forest.

On behalf of the government and the Parliamentary Labor Party, I express my sincere condolences to the Sharp family for their loss.

Members: Hear, hear!

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [2.14 pm]: The opposition joins the government to remember Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp, who was taken from us too soon.

Chrissy Sharp has the distinction of being the first member of the Greens to win a Legislative Council seat for the South West Region, to be re-elected, and to retire with a fellow member of the Greens retaining that seat. Chrissy was born in London in 1947 and was educated at Bishopshalt School in West London, the University of Sheffield

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Dr Brad Pettitt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Sophia Moermond

and the University of Kent, where she earned a master's degree. She was awarded a PhD from Murdoch University in 1983. She migrated to Western Australia in 1973 with her partner, Andrew, and operated a tree farm at Balingup, near to my own residence. She worked as an ABC journalist from 1974 to 1975 and served a term as a councillor for the Shire of Donnybrook–Balingup from 1983 to 1985. Chrissy was an inaugural member of the Greens at its inception in 1990. She was a very practical and knowledgeable environmentalist and served as the first female member of the Environmental Protection Authority of Western Australia, from 1989 to 1995. At the December 1996 election, Chrissy Sharp headed the Greens ticket for the South West Region, polling 7.5 per cent of the vote—a significant increase from the 5.1 per cent obtained by the Greens at the previous election. She won the seventh seat of the region at the expense of the Australian Labor Party.

She took up her seat in May 1997 and served as the chair of the Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development during the thirty-fifth Parliament—the first woman to chair a WA parliamentary standing committee. Members should bear in mind that this was almost the year 2000, so perhaps we came to that a little late in the process. In the following Parliament, she chaired the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. In 2001, Chrissy was re-elected, with 8.5 per cent of the vote in the South West Region. She took a strong stand in reviewing the electoral reform agenda of the Gallop government, insisting on the retention of the Legislative Council's regions. However, she had not intended to seek a long career in Parliament and stood down at the 2005 election, when the Greens retained her seat, although with a reduced 7.6 per cent of the vote.

That ends the formal part of what I would like to say about Chrissy Sharp. I will now spend a little time talking about Chrissy Sharp, my friend. Chrissy Sharp lived not too far away from me in the Shire of Donnybrook–Balingup, and we had known each other for quite a long time. I first met Chrissy when I had taken over the presidency of a small country conservative political branch in the mid-1990s. Looking to become active and explore the territory, we decided to address some of the key issues that were affecting that area. One of the first things we decided upon was the issue of forestry. Members might remember that during that period, the federal government was looking through the Regional Forest Agreement process. Members might remember that John Howard was the Prime Minister, and the rather famous Wilson Tuckey—not Tucker—was, for a brief period, the federal Minister for Forestry and Conservation. Rather than simply dragging out the usual very conservative groups and some timber industry people to discuss with us as a town and a branch what the timber industry was and what it could and should be, I did what I often do, which was that I went completely left field and invited Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp, at that point a member of the Greens, to come and address us and tell us what she thought it should look like. I think it took a couple of phone calls to convince her that this was a good idea, but I have to say that that meeting was probably one of my greatest successes within the lay party of the Liberal Party in inviting a group of disparate people to come and discuss an issue of relevance at a depth that gave substance to the debate. There was something like 100 people at that meeting in a small country town. Chrissy Sharp turned up without fear or favour, absolutely certain of what she was going to say, and impressed a roomful of arch-conservatives in a way that probably only Chrissy Sharp could do. She was a champion for her area for a long time. She understood the timber industry very well. She came to that meeting—into the lions' den, if you will—in a way that I think every member who turned up to that meeting in Donnybrook will remember. She delivered an amazing performance. We sat for a couple of hours talking about all the things that the forestry industry in Western Australia might or might not be. That is the standard of person she was. I came to know her much more after that event.

We, the opposition, also pass on our condolences to her family. She was taken from us much too soon. I note her children, in particular her son, Tosh. Members might be keen to know that he did work experience with me as a veterinarian many years ago. Despite my best efforts to infuse him with good conservative Liberal values, I suspect I failed. As we drove around the south west, delivering calves and doing all the other things you do as a country vet, I noted his astounding level of intelligence and interaction. That is the sort of legacy that we believe in and can see. Unfortunately, I do not know Lara nearly as well. I do not think she came for work experience, so apologies for that. It was a great time to get to know the family. I realise that you can leave behind this amazing sense of knowledge and inquisitiveness about the world that will leave your children in a better place. They can learn much more about the world. In Tosh's case, he was a young person who could see and debate both sides of an argument. I have not given up on converting him yet! But it may take a while, so I will see how we go. It is absolutely the case that we had a very close working relationship.

Chrissy Sharp did not finish her work on the forests when she finished her parliamentary career. She was passionate about her work and maintained a role. Even not long before her death, she was still contributing to research and debate on the forests in the south west of Western Australia. The one thing that we all knew and understood about Chrissy Sharp was that she brought a vivid focus and realism to the role that she undertook. Not for Chrissy Sharp was the purely ideological position that you can never cut down a tree and that every tree that dies is a disaster; she took a very pragmatic approach to this debate. She knew that a timber industry could exist in the long term, but it had to be sustainable, and to be sustainable it had to be significantly reduced from its size at the time. She and I, on this debate, go back to a time when we were harvesting 450 000 to 480 000 cubic metres of jarrah sawlogs, for

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Dr Brad Pettitt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Sophia Moermond

example. I apologise for the technical debate, but Chrissy and I used to love this stuff. We would debate the numbers ad nauseam. We were significantly over-cutting the forests.

I remember the lead-up to the 2001 state election, which is when the Gallop government came in. We had a federal election before that, and members might be surprised to know that Wilson Tuckey and I went head to head because we did not necessarily agree about some of these things—and that was always taking your life in your hands! The federal government put forward a proposal to cut back the timber harvest from effectively 450 000 to 300 000 cubic metres, with three variations: 310 000, 300 000 and 290 000 cubic metres. They were effectively the same thing. At the time I said, “I don’t believe that that is a real change. You’re giving three choices that are the same.” The conversations I had with Chrissy around that time absolutely demonstrated that that comment was right. Maybe we should have been arguing about how much further the harvest needed to go down, which probably was the case. In taking a position that was not necessarily popular among some of my colleagues in the Liberal Party, I knew that if I had Chrissy Sharp’s backing, I was somewhere near the right mark. I thought that was astounding.

Even this year, President, Chrissy Sharp was still working on these issues. She maintained the position that a discrete and sustainable timber industry could exist as long as we got it right. For that reason, I held her in enormous esteem, above almost everybody else I have engaged with in the forest debate, whether that was a forester, a politician or a conservationist. She could look at the debate dispassionately despite her enormous passion and come up with a valid solution in a way that I have never seen with anybody else.

She obviously had passion, President. She presented five private members’ bills in the two terms that she served in Parliament. The Legalise Cannabis WA Party crew would appreciate that the first couple of bills she presented were about the decriminalisation of cannabis, so you sort of had a champion in Chrissy Sharp as well. Most of the other bills related to conservation. She was passionate about that issue and I think that is reflected in her legacy here. Sorry; it is always hard when you have known somebody very well. I will take a deep breath.

The Balingup Greens are some of the most amazing people I have ever met, and I say that as an arch-conservative and a hard-right member of the Liberal Party—that is why I am positioned where I am in this place in the chamber, because no-one is further to the right than I am! The Balingup voting booth was the best voting booth in the entire south west. I used to try to pencil myself in all day at the Balingup voting booth, which was usually at the Balingup Primary School, because an amazing group of people from disparate walks of life would be there. I usually knew all the Greens who would turn up—half of them were clients of my veterinary practice. Chrissy and I would chat as we stood in the shade of the trees as people came through. We would very politely hand out how-to-vote cards. We knew almost everybody who walked in, and we probably knew how they voted, but we took no position on that. It was the friendliest and most relaxing booth that I have ever known. Sometimes when I took my children down there, they would go off with the children of members of the Greens to somebody’s house, play for a while and come back later. It was a polling booth of amazing civility. I think the influence of those people, in particular Chrissy, made it so. There was enormous respect across the political spectrum. Everybody had a right to be there and everybody was very friendly. In fact, a member of the ALP joined us for a couple of days there. I think he has passed away, too—I apologise; I have forgotten his name. I think it was Gary. Perhaps a member of the audience from Balingup will remember him.

Hon Dr Sally Talbot: Greg.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Thank you. It was Greg. He was an excellent fellow.

Hon Sue Ellery: He has passed?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Yes. I last handed out how-to-votes at Balingup in 2017—I think he passed on after that—and we sat down and worked out a sweepstakes of the seats at that time.

Balingup is the place where there is respect and friendship across the board, something that we do not see very often. I go to a lot of different polling booths and the metropolitan booths can be pretty brutal. The problem now will be that everybody will want to hand out how-to-vote cards at Balingup and there will be no MPs anywhere else! That will absolutely be the case. I will miss Chrissy next time I go down there. I will miss Margie and that group of people who, unfortunately, are no longer with us.

The last time I attempted to speak to Chrissy to wish her well with her illness was on 13 May this year. Unfortunately, she was not in a position to respond but I got a response from Andrew—thank you, Andrew.

Chrissy lived her life to the fullest to the very last. She was a powerful woman of enormous intellect and great courage; I never saw it waiver. She was my friend and a friend of the family. She could have done so much more here. She will be missed. We do her an honour today by remembering the legacy she has left. Our condolences to her family. She was an amazing woman and I will miss her.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Dr Brad Pettitt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Sophia Moermond

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.28 pm]: I rise on behalf of the Parliamentary Nationals WA to support the motion moved by the Leader of the House and to reflect on the achievements of Hon Christine Sharp. Of course, I acknowledge her friends and family, and former members in the President's gallery today. Chrissy Sharp was born in London in 1947 and arrived in Western Australia in 1973. First elected in 1997, Dr Christine "Chrissy" Sharp was a member of the Greens in the Legislative Council; indeed, she was a member of the Greens since their inception around 1990. As other members have mentioned, Chrissy chaired the Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development between 27 June 1997 and 10 January 2001. In fact, as others have said, she was the first female chair of a standing committee in the Western Australian Parliament. I have to say that I support what the Leader of the House said in that respect—I was shocked to find out that, indeed, prior to 1997, no woman had ever chaired a parliamentary standing committee in Western Australia. In fact, the decision to establish that committee was something that Chrissy referenced in her inaugural speech in this place as being a great desire of hers, and it was something that she championed from the time she was elected to this place.

Chrissy was well respected in the Balingup community, and she made sure that that part of the world became a Greens stronghold in regional WA. In fact, during the most recent state election campaign, we sent some Young Nationals members down there to do a bit of campaigning, and it was made very clear by the locals that the only colour green they would be supporting would be the Greens candidate; it is a very passionate Greens crowd down there. It is certainly part of Chrissy's legacy that the Greens have such a stronghold there.

She was also a keen negotiator with the Labor government when the lower house was reformed to the one vote, one value system. Part of the concessions won by the Greens was the creation of two new seats—one lower house regional seat and, of course, the six-by-six model in the Legislative Council, which she championed as representing Western Australia's bioregions.

Another huge part of her legacy is the Golden Valley Tree Park—a 60-hectare arboretum set in steep and scenic rural countryside about 1.5 kilometres south of Balingup. Golden Valley Tree Park is the largest arboretum in Western Australia, in terms of both area and the number of species. It is divided into two sections: 25 hectares for Australian trees and 35 hectares for a collection of world plants and trees. There are more than 3 000 individual trees and more than 500 different species, with some specimens dating back 100 years to the establishment of the original farming properties in that area; I think that is quite significant. The collection is increased every year. In 2001, Golden Valley Tree Park was given a permanent entry on the Register of Heritage Places and protected under the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990.

I would like to quote from Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp's valedictory speech in this place. She said —

As members would realise, running for Parliament for the Greens (WA) is a risky business. When I decided in 1996 to go for preselection, I was by no means certain that I would end up with a job. However, not only did I end up with a job, but also very significant changes took place in the Legislative Council in the new Parliament in 1997 and, in particular, the two smaller parties, the Democrats and the Greens, which included my colleagues Jim Scott, Giz Watson and me, had the balance of power. That was quite a shock. Members know that it takes a little while to get used to being in Parliament. It is quite a challenge not only getting used to Parliament but also finding ourselves in the hot seat, as it were. Ever since then, life has been tumultuous, and the pressure has been continuous; however, the achievements have been significant.

On behalf of the Parliamentary National Party, I, too, offer my condolences to Chrissy's family and friends, and I support the motion of the Leader of the House.

HON DR BRAD PETTITT (South Metropolitan) [2.32 pm]: I rise on behalf of the Greens WA to pay my respects to and acknowledge the enormous contribution of Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp, former Greens member of the Legislative Council for the South West Region. I begin by paying my respects to and acknowledging her family present in the President's gallery today, including Chrissy's partner, Andrew; her children, Tosh and Lara; and her son-in-law, Jeremy. I also acknowledge Chrissy's friends and former colleagues, including Hon Diane Evers, Hon Lynn MacLaren and Hon Bill Thomas, who are present today, along with those friends and colleagues who cannot be here in person, including, but not limited to, Hon Jim Scott, Hon Giz Watson, Hon Robin Chapple, Hon Dee Margetts and Hon Paul Llewellyn.

I never had the pleasure of working directly with Chrissy, but her passion and advocacy, both in and out of Parliament, left a very strong legacy in our green movement. Personally, my first interaction with Chrissy was a memorable lecture she gave to my undergraduate class at Murdoch University in the 1990s on forestry and the environment—an issue that she remained passionate about and involved with for much of her life.

But back to the beginning. Chrissy was born in London in 1947. Chrissy was the daughter of company director Alfred Sharp and Phyllis Sharp, nee Stone, and was educated at Bishopshalt School before going on to university.

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Dr Brad Pettitt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Sophia Moermond

At the University of Sheffield, she completed her Bachelor of Arts with honours in political theory and institutions and then a Master of Arts in political science at the University of Kent in Canterbury. After extensive travelling, Chrissy came to Western Australia in 1973. Ten years later, she completed her PhD at Murdoch University on the politics and ethics of the logging of old-growth forests, with her thesis titled *Perspectives on the Shannon: A study of subjectivity in the making of a political issue*. In the 1970s, Chrissy worked as a journalist with the ABC. Her radio interviews with First Nations people in Laverton over the arrests at Skull Creek helped prompt a royal commission into the incident and led to WA police employing Aboriginal aides.

During this same decade, Chrissy got involved in the Campaign to Save Native Forests. Forests and sustainability were two of Chrissy's fervent passions. Recalling first seeing the jarrah forest in Mundaring upon her arrival in Perth, Chrissy remarked that she was entranced by how ancient it felt. Chrissy was actively involved in three forest campaigns: one opposing the establishment of the woodchip industry, the campaign to save the Shannon River basin and a campaign to prevent the expansion of bauxite mining in the jarrah forest. It was through these campaigns that Chrissy met her partner, Andrew. In the late 1970s, Chrissy and Andrew moved from the city to a farm in Balingup, where they started a local business, the Small Tree Farm. Inspired by Dr E.F. Schumacher and his work *Small is Beautiful*, the Small Tree Farm is a small-scale family farm that has been a tree planting hub for over three decades. In the 1980s, Chrissy co-founded the Golden Valley Tree Park, WA's largest arboretum, in Balingup and helped organise many community tree plantings. As a tree farmer, Chrissy's great interest and passion was to demonstrate how economic needs can be harmonious with the protection of native forests and environmental protection more broadly. This is still a key pillar of our green movement today.

From 1983 to 1985, Chrissy sat on the Shire of Donnybrook–Balingup council, followed by a stint on the South West Development Authority's advisory committee. In 1989, Chrissy was appointed as the first female member of the Environmental Protection Authority, retaining her membership with the change of government until she resigned in 1994 over forest issues.

Chrissy was a founding member of the Greens WA when the party was formed in the early 1990s. In 1997, Chrissy was elected to the Legislative Council as a member for the South West Region, serving two terms before retiring in 2005. Chrissy was appointed as the first woman to chair a standing committee in the history of Western Australia's Parliament. This was the Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development. Later in her second term of Parliament, Chrissy chaired the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs. Both committees were amongst the most active committees in those two terms of state Parliament, in both the number and influence of those inquiries. Over those eight years, Chrissy chaired an extraordinary 15 inquiries and was responsible for all petitions tabled in the Legislative Council. Three of the inquiries were related to the issue Chrissy was most passionate about—forests.

Her son, Tosh, recalled that one time she even dragged her committee, including members of the major parties and, of course, Hansard, down to Giblett forest block and took submissions from protesters in situ. She used to go to great lengths to make the findings of these inquiries as unanimous as possible, due to her passion for consensus decision-making. In her valedictory speech, Chrissy remarked —

I have found my committee work a wonderful opportunity to do politics the way I like to do politics; that is, with cooperation across the parties, and by being solution-focused.

With the Greens holding the balance of power in the Legislative Council for the duration of her two terms in Parliament, Chrissy and her colleagues collaborated with great energy and success to move a large number of amendments. Chrissy termed this collaboration as a form of constructive compromise and gained, as she described, “Not our ideal position, but some improvement in that area of governance closer towards Green principles”. This constructive compromise saw greater social equity in public schooling, significant environmental outcomes, rights for IVF offspring, state recognition of native title, a moratorium on the introduction of genetically modified crops, legal abortion, LGBTQIA+ rights, and changes to the electoral system.

During her time in Parliament, Chrissy introduced five private members' bills. Chrissy was also passionate about harm minimisation and the decriminalisation of cannabis. Her first two bills dealt with the proposed decriminalisation of marijuana and the legalisation of hemp. Chrissy introduced the first bill in any state in Australia to legalise medical marijuana. Her other three bills focused on environmental issues, including regulating land clearing, protection of fauna in areas of state forest open to logging and the High Conservation Value Forest Protection Bill 1999, the latter being, in her view, despite its rejection by the Legislative Assembly, quite influential in the reversal of the Western Australian Regional Forest Agreement very soon after that.

Following decades of community campaigning, in December 2001, Chrissy had what she described as the great privilege to be in WA's Parliament to see the significant move towards her goal to protect old-growth forests with the addition of 853 000 hectares to the forest reserve. This was a significant milestone in the protection of WA's

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Dr Brad Pettitt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Sophia Moermond

biodiversity, and I am sure had Chrissy been here this year, she would have joined us in celebrating the recent announcement to end logging of native forests.

In explaining her decision to leave politics during her valedictory speech in 2005, Chrissy referred to the difficulties as a country resident of juggling “the responsibilities of farming, raising a family, servicing an office that is located 300 kilometres away, chairing a committee and holding the balance of power in this place”. Despite having an immense workload while holding the balance of power, Chrissy and her Greens colleagues did not qualify for parliamentary party status and were expected to be across every issue and bill with no more staff than a normal backbencher. You would often find Chrissy still at Parliament in the early hours of the morning photocopying one page at a time.

After standing down from politics, people would often comment to Chrissy that she must be relieved to get away from politics. She would reply, “Oh no, I still stand for politics. It is all we have got to find a way forward for our society.” Chrissy continued to be active in environmental sustainability following her retirement from Parliament. In 2018, Chrissy and her partner were awarded joint WA environmental volunteers of the year for their 40 years of work to establish the Golden Valley Tree Park in partnership with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. She also worked with the Forest Products Commission on the *Djarlma plan for the Western Australian forestry industry*, as part of an independent panel.

As a very close colleague of Chrissy’s told her son, Tosh —

Chrissy stuck to reason, not ideology. Because of this she had this knack of bringing about change without conflict. Politicians by title are supposed to be honourable. Chrissy really WAS honourable. In fact, she was probably the most honourable person in the whole building.

I would like to finish with an excerpt from the manuscript to Chrissy’s book “Being in the Balance of Power”, which will hopefully be published posthumously. It says —

Our pragmatic working ethos was a rule: we never traded across issues only within them. We never considered supporting an un-principled move on a non-core issue for gains in what for us was a more crucial area. Each issue was dealt with on its own merit. And our political relations with all the parties were respectful despite our differences ... The noisier a Parliament, the less work it is getting done.

Vale Chrissy.

HON STEPHEN DAWSON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Mental Health) [2.43 pm]: I, too, rise to make some brief comments about Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp, whom I had the pleasure of knowing a few times over the years. I first of all pay my condolences to Andrew and the family. I also acknowledge the former parliamentary colleagues who are here today, Cheryl, Bill and Diane, and I think Lynn MacLaren is here somewhere, too. We could not see you from the cheap seats—apologies!

I first came across Chrissy long before I was in this place when she helped the student guilds of Western Australia to overturn voluntary student unionism in Western Australia. People in this place might remember that Hon Norman Moore as part of the Court government brought voluntary student unionism into being in Western Australia. In 2002, when Chrissy had the balance of power along with her Greens colleagues, the student movement worked incredibly closely with her and, thankfully, one of the last things that the Parliament did in 2002, I think on 19 December, was to allow universities in Western Australia to charge a fee to enable students on campus to get quality services and support. I want to thank Chrissy for that.

In later years when I was Minister for Environment, it was my pleasure in 2018 to jointly award Andrew and Chrissy the Volunteer of the Year Award for their 40 years of hard work at the Golden Valley Tree Park. I received an invitation to visit the park last year, but, unfortunately, Chrissy was too ill to meet with me on the day that I went. I was briefed and shown around the park by other people involved in the group. Chrissy was an environmental champion before she joined this place; we know that from her time at the Environmental Protection Authority. She was a champion while she was here and she remained a champion until her dying days.

Thank you, Chrissy Sharp, for your years of service to this state. Vale.

HON ALANNAH MacTIERNAN (South West — Minister for Regional Development) [2.45 pm]: To Chrissy’s family, friends and colleagues, it is a fantastic testament to the person that Chrissy was that attending the chamber today are not only representatives from her own party, but also colleagues from other parties. Apart from the Leader of the House and, for possibly a very short time, the Leader of the Opposition, who might have been in the Parliament at the same time as Chrissy, I was a member when Chrissy was here, albeit not in this chamber. Certainly, Chrissy had a very, very visible presence. Of course, when she first joined Parliament and we were in opposition, we had a shared interest in drug law reform. I think Chrissy may have also joined the group of parliamentarians across Australia that was seeking reform in the drug law area. As it has been outlined today, Chrissy contributed to that

Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Dr Steve Thomas; Hon Colin De Grussa; Hon Dr Brad Pettitt; Hon Stephen Dawson; Hon Alannah MacTiernan; Hon Sophia Moermond

cause over the eight years of her time in this Parliament. No doubt she would be very pleased to see that we have two members of a party here today who are continuing that argument.

Of course, Chrissy's big passion was the environment. She acted in her own life with the establishment of the tree farm, which has been set out in a very practical way. She contributed to the reforestation of Western Australia and, of course, was a profoundly important proponent of the arguments around the need for proper forest management and sustainable ecological development. When I was the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Chrissy was certainly a very engaged member on those issues; indeed, she was a big proponent of getting as much freight on rail as possible. Having gone through the questions she asked and the motions that she moved during her time in this place when we were in government, I know that she certainly pushed that issue very passionately.

I really rise today to reflect the comments that have been made by so many others. Chrissy had incredibly strong values and was incredibly well-informed and with those values she was able to bring so much learning. However, at the same time, Chrissy was never, shall we say, morally self-righteous. Indeed, part of the reason Chrissy was able to develop relationships across all sides of politics was because she was able to understand another point of view even if she did not agree with it. She did not call people out as morally reprehensible because they did not share her views. That was because of the learning, the detail and the rigour of her arguments. It was also her preparedness to understand that people might not come from the same perspective as hers without them being morally challenged human beings. As I said, I think this is what really contributed to her ability to have a very positive input, both directly and indirectly, in the policies and the laws that were developed in this state.

To all her family and to the Greens, you can be exceptionally proud of this wonderful woman and what she achieved.

HON SOPHIA MOERMOND (South West) [2.50 pm]: I rise to make a very brief contribution to this condolence motion marking the passing of Hon Dr Christine Sharp and to share with her family members here today and those who are unable to be with us our deepest sympathies at this time of loss. I did not know Chrissy Sharp; her contributions in this place and to WA politics as a whole were well before my time, although I stand in admiration of them as summarised here by all my colleagues who had the pleasure of serving alongside her. Her contributions show that she was a wise, insightful and strong woman who had compassion for those who may have had different opinions and that she was understanding and willing to negotiate around that. It would be remiss of me not to follow on from Hon Dr Brad Pettitt's comment and acknowledge that she was, I believe, the first member of either chamber of this Parliament to introduce private members' bills to begin to unravel the legislation in which we have tied cannabis for so long. She introduced two such private members' bills, the Misuse of Drugs Amendment (Cannabis Cautioning Notices) Bill 1999 and the Poisons Amendment (Cannabis for Medical and Commercial Uses) Bill 1999. They were worthy pieces of legislation, well thought out and tabled with the best interests of the WA community at their heart. I have no doubt that she played a considerable part in influencing government policy of the day and that they are bills that she could rightly have been very proud of, as can her family and friends when they look back on her legacy.

On behalf of the Legalise Cannabis WA Party and, indeed, on behalf of the legalise cannabis movement Australia-wide, I offer our condolences and our deepest respects.

The PRESIDENT: I ask members to now rise and stand in your places to indicate your support for the motion and to observe one minute's silence in memory of the late Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp, esteemed former member of this Council.

Question passed; members and officers standing as a mark of respect.

The PRESIDENT: I advise that in accordance with our custom and practice, a copy of the *Hansard* transcript of this condolence motion will be forwarded to Hon Dr Chrissy Sharp's family.