



MEDIA RELEASE 1 September 2017

The Key to Your House

The Key to Your House is a 12 part documentary that delves into the history and inner workings of Parliament House.



Named after a historic key presented to the Hon Sir Walter James MLA, Premier of Western Australia, on the opening of the new Parliament building in 1904, the program is a joint initiative between the Parliament of Western Australia and West Television (Channel 44).

Deeply reflective and undisguised in its honesty, it unlocks the mystery and mystique of Parliament House.

Through social commentary it explores the impact of war, geographical isolation and changing economic times on the community of Western Australia.

'The history behind the staged construction of Parliament House, women's entry into politics and Parliament's legislative program, provides a window into our social past', said Hon Kate Doust MLC, President of the Legislative Council.

'It is a past that evidences community hardship yet the resilience of the Western Australian people and the growth of our State.'

The program includes interviews with current and former Members of Parliament and Parliamentary staff on the workings of Parliament and their journey to Parliament House.

Serving to not only enhance the public's understanding of the Parliamentary process and the daily operations of the House, the interviews also show a very human side to Parliament and the diverse backgrounds from which Parliamentarians and staff originate.

'The interviews are very candid, some are humorous and some are quite raw', said Hon Peter Watson MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

‘In one interview, a former country Member details how she was only home for 41 nights in one year and used to sleep in a swag on the top of her car in truck stops in order to meet the demands of Parliament and her electorate.’

‘While this is quite an extreme example’, said Mr Watson, ‘the interviews repeatedly reflect a common commitment by Members of Parliament to their role in serving the community, it is not a role for the faint-hearted.’

The program dispels the often held public perception that Members of Parliament only work while Parliament is sitting and that Parliament is about arguing and the bluff and bluster of Question Time.

Members are required to undertake constituency and other roles external to Parliament House and when at Parliament they participate in a range of Parliamentary Business.

‘Other Parliamentary processes are not as dramatic as Question Time but that does not mean they are not as important or more important,’ said Ms Doust.

‘Law-making, petitions, Parliamentary debates and Parliamentary Committees for example, are all integral to the health of our communities and often reflect high levels of cooperation amongst members from different political persuasions.’

The program explores avenues for public participation in the Parliamentary process and reinforces that people in this State have the power to influence Parliamentary decisions on issues that they are passionate about.

‘The Shark Cull, the Solar Panel debate and the *Inquiry into the Kimberley Ultra Marathon* are key examples of people power’, said Mr Watson.

The documentary also examines Parliament’s art collection, one of the largest State art collections of any Parliament in Australia. The collection depicts change in the State of Western Australia over time and recognises and honours the culture and identity of Aboriginal people.

As a documentary on one of the oldest civic institutions, one deeply rooted in social and Parliamentary history, the program speaks to the quirky stories and interesting traditions of the State Parliament. The public will learn about the origins of the Parliamentary Mace, the role of the Parliamentary pool cue and find out when Parliament got a front door.



The Key to Your House will air on West Television (Channel 44) commencing 5.45pm on 5 September 2017.

For further information on the documentary, or to book an interview with the Presiding Officers on the program, please contact Ms Katherine Galvin, Project Manager, on (08) 9222 7222 or email education@parliament.wa.gov.au.

BROADCAST SCHEDULE:

First Broadcast:	Repeat Broadcast:
Dates: 5 - 14 Sept & 10 - 19 Oct 2017	Dates: 31 Oct - 30 Nov 2017
Time: 5.45 pm	Time: 5.45 pm
Days: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays	Days: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays
Repeats: 11.45am the following day	Repeats: 11.45am the following day

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