

EMERITUS PROFESSOR LAKSIRI JAYASURIYA, AM — TRIBUTE

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.14 pm]: I am greatly saddened to report the passing of Emeritus Professor Laksiri Jayasuriya, AM, an eminent academic, communicator and writer, who fought for fairness and equality for all members of society. Professor Jayasuriya passed away on 20 April at 86 years of age. Professor Jayasuriya was a key contributor to the development of the Western Australian Charter of Multiculturalism and the state anti-racism strategy during the Gallop Labor government. With a background in sociology and social welfare, Professor Jayasuriya spent his life passionately engaging with the topics of multiculturalism, anti-racism, social and welfare policy, and immigration.

Professor Jayasuriya was born in Sri Lanka on 27 October 1931. He was educated at the Royal College, Colombo, and at the Universities of Ceylon, Sydney and London, where he gained his doctorate. He taught at the University of Ceylon from 1956 until 1969, when he became professor of sociology and social welfare at the University of Colombo. He returned to Australia in 1971 as associate professor of social work at the University of Western Australia. In 1974, he became professor of social work and social administration—a position he held until 1992. He was also director of the Centre for Asian Studies.

During his professional life, Professor Jayasuriya was a member of the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council, the Western Australian migrant taskforce committee, the Australian Council of Social Service, the Australia National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education, the Western Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission, and the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council. He was also a vice-president of the Western Australian Council of Social Service and was on the board of governors of the Australian Council of Social Service. At various stages of his life, he was president of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia, West Australians for Racial Equality, and the Perth Asian Community Centre. He was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1985, and was elected a fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia in 2000.

Emeritus Professor Jayasuriya will be sadly missed, but he will continue to inspire, lead and challenge policymakers, politicians and students through the incomparable legacy of his work and writings.

I acknowledge the presence in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon of his wife, Rohini, and family members Kanishka, Pradeep, Nanil and Anoja. On behalf of the state government, I offer our sincerest condolences to Professor Jayasuriya's family, colleagues and friends.