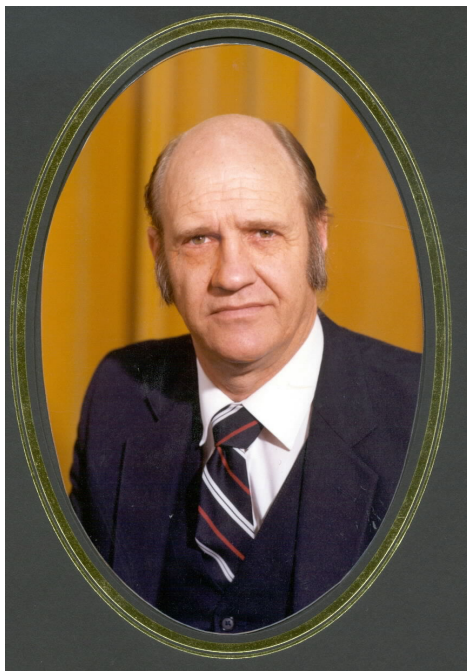




PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HON ARTHUR RAYMOND TONKIN, MLA

Condolence Motion



Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 14 June 2022

Reprinted from Hansard

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Condolence Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [2.01 pm] — without notice: On behalf of the Premier and the Parliament, I move —

That this house records its sincere regret at the death of Hon Arthur Raymond Tonkin and tenders its deepest sympathy to his family.

I begin by paying my respects to the family, who are in the Speaker's gallery today. Mrs Bettina Tonkin, Arthur's wife; sons, Richard and Phillip; daughter, Jasmine; and Joce and Levi are here this afternoon. Arthur Tonkin entered this Parliament in 1971 and he, along with Mal Bryce, represented Labor's new guard. They were a firebrand group of mostly teachers who entered Parliament in the 1970s and were constant agitators for change and renewal. Bruce Okely, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly at the time, said —

They were then very outspoken and the young men of that period behaved in ways which some of the older members of Parliament found to be somewhat extraordinary and perhaps even unpalatable.

For Arthur, politics was about devotional loyalty to an idea, rather than loyalty to a person. He demonstrated a genuine commitment to engaging in policy and the contest of ideas. But when it came to electoral equality, it was not so much a contest but a long and strident battle. Arthur proved to be a relentless fighter for electoral reform, a fight that ultimately led to Arthur sacrificing his career, rather than having to compromise on his convictions.

Arthur Raymond Tonkin was born on 21 January 1930 in Kelmscott to Norman and Florence Tonkin. Arthur was the fifth of six children. His father and three brothers all fought in the world wars and he would later tell Parliament that the only reason he did not fight was that he was too young. Arthur attended Gosnells Primary School, and then Perth Boys School until the age of 14. As a teenager, he earned money by selling newspapers, labouring at Canning Dam and working at a hardware store and as a farmhand in Wongan Hills. At 18 years of age, he travelled to Melbourne not by train or by car but, according to his son Richard, he rode 3 400 kilometres across the country on his Malvern Star pushbike alongside his brother Harold. In Melbourne, he completed his entire intermediate certificate and returned to Perth, and through self-taught night study completed two years of matriculation requirements in just one year. It was about this time, at the age of 19, Arthur proudly joined the Australian Labor Party. To him, it was an expression of his basic belief about the way in which society should be organised and governed.

After graduating from the University of Western Australia in 1953, Arthur embarked on a 17-year career in education, teaching at schools right across the state, including Armadale Senior High School and Bridgetown Junior High School, where he taught a young Barry MacKinnon, the Liberal MP he would later see across the chamber. During one debate in 1977, Arthur Tonkin in reference to a court judgement, said MacKinnon may have read it, but he could not understand it. MacKinnon responded that he should be able to understand it as it was Arthur Tonkin who taught him! Arthur responded by saying —

Yes, I know ... I see failure staring me at the face every day.

Tonkin finished his teaching career in 1970, having spent four years as senior master of history and economics at John Forrest Secondary College. At the 1971 election, the Labor Party needed just three seats to win office and defeat WA's longest serving Premier in Sir David Brand and the Liberal–Country coalition government, and that is exactly what the Labor Party did with Arthur Tonkin winning the seat of Mirrabooka with a margin of just 1.7 per cent. It was the third and final seat needed for the Labor Party to return to government after 12 years in opposition. He would represent Mirrabooka for only one term, with the seat being abolished after redistribution. Arthur would instead go on to be the member for Morley from 1974 to 1983 and the member for Morley–Swan from 1983 to 1987. His hold on his seat would strengthen at nearly every election, from holding Labor's most marginal seat to one of the strongest in the state by 1983, holding Morley–Swan on a margin of 20.9 per cent, a record he held until the current member for Morley's win at last year's election.

As an MP, education remained a passion for Arthur Tonkin. In his first Parliament, he spoke of the crisis in education that the Tonkin Labor government had inherited with overcrowded and substandard classrooms and lower-than-average learning rates. But what was extraordinary about Arthur Tonkin's first term was his eagerness to push for reform to our electoral system and our Parliament. This was a first-term government backbencher advocating for wholesale reform to our democracy. After less than a year as a member of Parliament, Arthur Tonkin was rigorously prosecuting the principle of one vote, one value. He reminded the house that members were there as —

... representatives of the people; not of acres, or heads of stock, or income.

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He said they were there for the people. Arthur's other pursuit was the establishment of a parliamentary committee system, something that would become his legacy in this place. He believed it would be the most fundamental and far-reaching step taken by Parliament since the introduction of universal franchise. It would enable greater public debate and engagement with the Parliament and more legislation to be dealt with. His leader, Premier John Tonkin, agreed to an inquiry; however, it was opposed by the then opposition. It would not be until 10 years later, when Labor returned to government, that the committee system would be established.

It was in opposition, though, that Arthur Tonkin established himself as the ultimate parliamentary brawler. A firebrand with a sharp tongue, in one debate regarding education Arthur told an opposition member the only good thing about him being a member of Parliament was that he was not teaching children! Arthur was also mischievous. In response to being called "a guttersnipe" by Arthur, the then Minister for Labour and Industry told him to take it outside, but instead of interpreting this as a threat of defamation, Arthur suggested it was something more violent. Arthur raised the issue in question time and asked —

- (1) Does the Deputy Premier approve of Ministers of the Crown continually challenging other members of Parliament to a fight?
- (2) Is this the normal way of settling disputes in the Cabinet?
- (3) If so, on how many occasions has such a challenge been made and what were the results of the various bouts?
- (4) Does the Deputy Premier provide training facilities for his Cabinet Ministers so that they can take on the Minister for Labour and Industry?

Unsurprisingly, the Deputy Premier did not respond and said —

... it covers an area which does not come directly under my ministerial responsibility ...

But it was the matter of electoral equality that elicited the most fiery and passionate responses by Arthur Tonkin. The Electoral Districts Act Amendment Bill, in short, legislated a specific number of lower house seats in the three regional districts that he said would further enshrine malapportionment. In Arthur's view, it was a divisive bill that further ripped away the principle of one vote, one value from Western Australia. In his view, it very clearly discriminated on the basis of where people happen to live, with arbitrary lines on a map. Arthur said in his second reading contribution —

That is a horrible distortion and prostitution of anything that can be called electoral justice.

Interestingly, at that time, in 1975, the seat of Kalamunda was regarded a country seat. Arthur remarked —

We find that the electors of Kalamunda have a greater need for the services of the flying doctor!

He said that some electorates only 16 or 17 miles away from Perth were being regarded as country areas and, as a result, were apparently—to the then government—"disadvantaged and they must be treated in a special kind of way". In his words —

This is the kind of fraud the Government has perpetrated and brought to this House.

A week on from Arthur's ardent attack on the bill, you might have been forgiven for thinking his passion had cooled. But barely less than five minutes into the committee stage, Arthur continued with what former Clerk Bruce Okely said was fury that knew no bounds. "A corrupt government led by a corrupt leader", Arthur said. Predictably, the then Premier Sir Charles Court rose on a point of order, finding the comment objectionable. The chair asked that the unparliamentary comments be withdrawn, and Arthur responded with —

Mr Chairman, you must be joking!

...

There is something more important than parliament and that is democracy and the people.

What followed was nothing short of procedural chaos, and Arthur ended up being named. He failed to raise points of order and refused to sit down. His offsider Mal Bryce leapt to his defence, only also to be named. The Premier successfully moved a motion to suspend Arthur, who defiantly remained in the chamber, continuing his attempt to raise a point of order. Arthur was eventually escorted from the chamber by the Sergeant-at-Arms. In scenes the Parliament would not see until a couple of minutes later, Mal Bryce, too, was escorted out of the chamber, saying —

As I withdraw —

...

— from a toy Parliament corrupted by a vile government ...

In 1977, we saw one of the most unedifying chapters of the Parliament in this state's political history. In that year's election, in the seat of Kimberley, the sitting member Alan Ridge defeated Labor's Ernie Bridge by just 93 votes. However, both sides claimed questionable tactics. What emerged during a 44-day case in the Court of Disputed

Returns was evidence of a campaign to prevent many illiterate Aboriginal people from voting. Those who could not read or write were denied the ability to present how-to-vote cards to indicate their preferences. A new election was ordered, but two days later the then government rushed in a bill that would have made it impossible for illiterate people to cast their votes. If it passed, how-to-vote cards would not be able to be used for voting. This, to Arthur, was more than a manipulation of Aboriginal people. In his words, it was an attempt to “rig the electoral laws”. To him, this was about democracy—something people had given up a great deal to fight for. He said —

... we have no hesitation in affirming, that the people of this State no matter what their colour or where they may live have a right to vote and have a right to choose any Government they wish to choose ...

Throughout the debate he would constantly interject and challenge what were some of the most abhorrent comments made in the chamber at the time in relation to Aboriginal people.

On 15 November 1977, the bill was put to a vote. Four National Country Party members crossed the floor, and the Independent MP Tom Dadour abstained from voting, leading to a tied vote. The bill rested on the casting vote of the Liberal Party Speaker Ian Thompson. In Thompson’s view, the Court of Disputed Returns judgement should be respected and the by-election held on the same terms as the original election. The Speaker voted with the noes and the bill was defeated, and it prompted applause. When Thompson died, 32 years later, there appeared a very short death notice in *The West Australian*. It read: A tribute to a parliamentarian of the highest integrity and courage, able to rise above petty squabbles and narrow considerations. It was from Arthur Tonkin.

Arthur and his friend Mal Bryce became known as “the flying wedge” due to their enthusiastic and effective approach to policy and politics. Following Labor’s loss in the 1980 state election, the young guard determined that fresh leadership was needed in order for the party to cut through. Arthur and Mal led the charge in caucus. Although both were seen as aspiring future leaders, the party opted for another young, ambitious candidate.

In 1983, Labor finally returned to government and Arthur was appointed Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform and Leader of the House, as well as Minister for Water Resources and, for a short period, Minister for Consumer Affairs. He immediately went to work in trying to deliver the government’s mandate for electoral reform. Within five months, Arthur introduced a bill that would ensure each voter had the right to cast a vote equal in value to each other. He said the bill would end “gross deception and wilful manipulation of the electorate” and urged those who believed in democracy to join hands to create a system of parliamentary representation of which they could be proud. He said —

The fairness of the new electoral system will put an end to division and bitterness and will usher in a new phase of unity and political maturity—one State, one-vote-one-value.

But, in a Legislative Council in which the Liberal Party and the National Country Party held about two-thirds of the seats, the bill of course was defeated.

Despite bitter disappointment, Arthur tried again in 1984, putting forward a bill that contained some compromise, but again it was defeated in the Legislative Council. In response, Arthur said —

The behaviour of the Opposition-dominated Legislative Council has reaffirmed its historical party political bias, noting that in the past 32 years the Legislative Council had only blocked one non-Labor government bill, in contrast to 49 bills proposed by Labor governments.

In order to address these deadlocks between the two houses, in 1985 Arthur Tonkin introduced a bill to establish a referendum that, if successful, would mirror the process adopted by the federal Parliament—that being a joint sitting held to try to resolve disagreements between the houses and, if that fails, a double dissolution election. Arthur encouraged members to treat the bill on its merits, although noting the record of obstruction in the Legislative Council. He said —

Any parliamentarian who is afraid to place this issue before the people is not a worthy representative of the people in a nation claiming to be democratic.

The bill was defeated in the Legislative Council.

In 1986, Labor returned to government for a second term. Arthur was appointed Minister for Police and Emergency Services, and Water Resources; however, the responsibility for electoral reform was handed to his friend Mal Bryce, who took up the fight for one vote, one value. At a cabinet meeting in Geraldton, Bryce produced a draft bill embodying the promise of one vote, one value, which Labor took to the election. But what would follow was something Arthur would call “a betrayal of basic Labor principles from people whom I believed were my comrades in arms.” He said —

To hear my colleagues say, as they did in Geraldton on Sunday night, that we must make absolutely sure that the bill, which will contain the promises we made to people at the election, is defeated was to hear betrayed all that I have tried to stand for as a member of the Australian Labor Party.

Arthur Tonkin resigned from cabinet, saying his position was untenable and telling the Premier —

Pragmatism in politics is necessary. But there is a line beyond which we should not go.

The decision to compromise on the bill was backed in caucus. Liberal MP Bill Stretch, who admired Arthur's conviction, later said —

... they were just about calling for sawdust outside the caucus room door. The corridor had to be closed because of the shouting, screaming, yelling and the absolute vituperation that was to be heard.

Arthur gave an undertaking to the government that he would not speak publicly about his resignation. His silence, though, put him at a disadvantage when it came to issues about that matter.

Arthur Tonkin resigned from Parliament in March 1987, bringing an end to his parliamentary career. However, he would continue to remain engaged in public policy and was a frequent letter writer to *The West Australian*.

It is with pride that Arthur Tonkin lived to see one vote, one value finally achieved by this government. Fifty years after he led the fight, the party's longstanding promise was fulfilled. The Labor Party and its pursuit of electoral equality owes a lot to the late Arthur Tonkin.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I end on a quote from Arthur's contribution in 1975 to the government bill he so vehemently opposed. He said —

It is not possible for this Government to destroy our ideals which it cannot even begin to understand.

These ideals are indestructible. They will continue and we will eventually have this system of one-vote-one-value. I am not going to be so bold as to say when it will occur, or whether it will happen within the next decade. However, as surely as the sun will rise tomorrow the system of one-vote-one-value will be introduced into Western Australia. It is a principle which will endure long after present politicians, with their machinations, conniving and grabbing for power have passed from the scene.

On behalf of the Premier, who again sends his apologies for not being able to be here this afternoon but extends his condolences to all of Arthur's family, and on behalf of the state Parliamentary Labor Party and the government of Western Australia, this Parliament passes on its condolences to Arthur's family and friends and thanks him for his significant contribution to our democracy in this state.

Vale, Arthur Raymond Tonkin.

Members: Hear, hear!

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [2.21 pm]: I rise on behalf of the opposition and the Nationals WA to pay my respects and reflect on the contribution that Hon Arthur Raymond Tonkin made to this Parliament and to public life. I also acknowledge his family, including those sitting in the chamber today who have joined us—wife Bettina, Richard, Jasmine, Phillip, Joce and Levi. It is wonderful to have them here as Arthur is honoured.

Arthur was born on 21 January 1930 in Kelmscott. He left school around the age of 14. He had many jobs, from farmhand to labourer, even an orderly, before settling as a teacher from 1950. Arthur was a member of the State School Teachers' Union of WA. He joined the Australian Labor Party in 1949 and was elected to Parliament in 1971. He returned to teaching after leaving Parliament, and passed away on 5 May 2022 at the age of 92.

Arthur was first elected to the electorate of Mirrabooka. Helping win government for Labor, he successfully transferred to the seat of Morley after Mirrabooka was abolished, and again successfully transferred to the seat of Morley–Swan. He retired from politics after 16 years, both in opposition and also in government. His shadow appointments were varied and vast, focusing on industrial relations, consumer affairs, immigration, planning, tourism, local government and regional development, and he also wore a hat as manager of opposition business. In government, his ministerial portfolios included water, consumer affairs, parliamentary and electoral reform, police, emergency services and also Leader of the House.

From reading *Hansard* and listening to the Leader of the House today, it was clear that Arthur had an enduring passion for the democratic rights of people as they voted here in Western Australia and in our voting system. He also had a keen interest in agriculture, sport and mental fitness. I understand he had an enduring relationship with chess and also education. His first speech focused on agricultural tariffs, economic rationalisations, teachers' rights and cherishing those democratic rights that the Leader of the House spoke of.

I looked at Arthur's first speech. Although some of those principles have been hotly debated in this Parliament—as the Leader of the House noted—from his background as a teacher, we can see that he had an enduring passion for social sciences. He made sure that everybody understood how to participate to their fullest and ensured that they exercised that vote, understanding what we are so privileged to have in Australia. In his first speech to the house, he said —

I will never be called upon to build a bridge; I will leave that to the engineer. I will never be called upon to diagnose a case of embolism; I will entrust that task to the physician. But each and every one of us is

called upon to make decisions on the course society should take. Yet it is precisely this field—the field of social sciences, the field of study that will lead to progress in our understanding of man the individual and of man in society—that is most neglected; a neglect that will lead us very rapidly to our undoing.

If we want our young people to understand and cherish democracy; if we are concerned that they may be lead astray by demagogues, then we should give them the tools so that they may be able to evaluate the many and varied ideas with which they will be assailed. If a student's roots go deep into the democratic processes, he will be able to withstand the seductive blandishments of extremists whether they be of the left or the right.

I believe it is immoral to say to our youth: "You can have power by way of the vote, but we will do nothing to equip you with the knowledge and the wisdom that will help you to make decisions that will save mankind from disaster."

As members of Parliament engage in that democratic process every day, to hear the passion with which Arthur spoke about the importance of making sure that we educate everyone about what a privilege it is to vote and to exercise that vote, whether we agree or disagree with the policy that comes to this Parliament, he certainly sounded like an amazing individual.

Our condolences to his family and friends. We think of you often. When we speak in condolence motions like this, often the price of public life takes away from being present in family and friends' lives. It is an opportunity to also thank you for your contribution to the life in public that Arthur had.

Vale.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [2.26 pm]: I also rise, in this case on behalf of the Liberal Party, to express my condolences to Arthur Tonkin's family and friends. Arthur Tonkin was a passionate and authentic representative of the Australian Labor Party whose 1971 entry into Parliament put Labor into government. He was someone who worked to modernise the party prior to its return to government in 1983. As we have already heard, Arthur had an interesting and extensive career, certainly before he went to university and afterwards, leaving school at the age of 14 and then going on to matriculate. I was especially impressed that he did it in 12 months at the University of Western Australia. Then he went to Claremont Teachers College, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in history and a diploma in education. He taught at a number of primary schools, going from the bush into the city. I have no doubt whatsoever that that was a great background for him when he came to this Parliament.

Having joined the Australian Labor Party aged 19 in 1949 and being active in the beginnings of the environmental movement and in opposition to the Vietnam War, Arthur Tonkin was endorsed as the ALP candidate for the district of Mirrabooka at the 1971 state election. Obviously, that district is markedly different from the district that is there today, but that was then moved to the seat based on Morley, Dianella, Bedford and Yokine. At that stage, it was held by the late Doug Cash. In February 1971, Arthur won Mirrabooka with 599 votes. That was just 51.7 per cent. Over the next several elections, he substantially increased his majority. He was clearly an extremely popular local member.

As the Leader of the Opposition outlined, Arthur really spoke with conviction on the damage done to rural industries by trade protection and on the need for the education system. He stressed the importance of the humanities and, in particular, focused on making sure that youth were properly educated. From his first term, Arthur Tonkin was a strong proponent of electoral change, attacking the lower enrolments of non-metropolitan districts and Legislative Council provinces. At the 1974 election, the district of Mirrabooka was more appropriately renamed Morley. Despite the defeat of the Tonkin government, he was very comfortably re-elected, with 57 per cent of the vote. He enjoyed very strong majorities, as I said before, over the next four elections. From 1977 to 1983, he was shadow spokesman for a range of portfolios, including labour, consumer affairs, town planning, tourism and local government, and also served as manager of opposition business from September 1981.

Arthur Tonkin worked with Jeff Carr, Mal Bryce, Bob Pearce and Brian Burke to modernise and re-energise the Labor Party. After the 1983 election, he served as Leader of the House and Minister for Water Resources; Consumer Affairs; Parliamentary and Electoral Reform. However, he lost the parliamentary and electoral reform portfolio after the 1986 election, when he became Minister for Police and Emergency Services. As we heard, Arthur Tonkin disagreed with the Burke government's more pragmatic approach to electoral change after 1986, leading to his resignation from cabinet in May 1986 and from the Legislative Assembly in March 1987.

He had an extremely active retirement, teaching English, history and chess on a voluntary basis, helping to produce six state junior chess champions from Mirrabooka high school. He was president of the Chess Association of WA for many years after 1988, and supported Amnesty International and other advocacy groups. He also wrote a novel and continued to enjoy bushwalking. He was clearly both physically and mentally active after his time in Parliament.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Mrs Bettina Tonkin; his sons, Richard and Phillip; his daughter, Jasmine; his grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and his extended family.

Vale Arthur Tonkin.

MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Minister for Health) [2.31 pm]: I rise to contribute to the motion this afternoon on the contribution made by Arthur Tonkin in this place and in our community.

In January 1930 in Kelmscott, Arthur was born to Florence and Norman. He was the fifth of six children. Norman worked as a labourer after being injured in World War I. Florence and Norman perhaps did not imagine that their son would go on to serve Western Australia as a parliamentarian for 16 years, including several years as a minister. He left his education at 14 years and worked as a farmhand, selling newspapers, in factories and a post office, and as an orderly at Royal Perth Hospital. In his twenties, Arthur returned to his education, studying through what was then known as night school to qualify for entrance to tertiary education. In 1960, aged 30, he qualified as a teacher, having taken a Bachelor of Arts in history and a diploma in education. During his career as a teacher, Tonkin taught at schools across the city and in regional Western Australia. By 1970, Arthur Tonkin had reached the level of senior master in history and economics at John Forrest Senior High School, a school that I later attended. The following year, upon his entry into the WA Parliament as the member for Mirrabooka, he stated —

I believe it is immoral to say to our youth: “You can have power by way of the vote, but we will do nothing to equip you with the knowledge and the wisdom that will help you to make decisions that will save mankind from disaster.”

Tonkin’s passion for education and electoral equality converged in 1983 when he served as the inaugural Minister for Parliamentary and Electoral Reform, a role he held for three years. Although he ultimately resigned his cabinet position over the issue of electoral reform, he laid important groundwork for WA’s electoral system to be shaped into something that we might recognise today. He was a true believer. He believed fervently in one vote, one value and was sad to see this part of his electoral reform agenda sacrificed to political compromise. His vision for electoral equality was eventually realised during his lifetime, with this government’s Constitutional and Electoral Legislation Amendment (Electoral Equality) Bill 2021.

Arthur was a very committed, popular and principled local member. Many local people often tell me they knew Arthur. He was very, very highly regarded. Branch members remember branch meetings with Arthur. He made an enormous contribution locally. I thank him for that and I thank his family for that.

Arthur Tonkin retained a deep passion for education throughout his life, continuing to teach after his parliamentary career. He is survived by his wife, Bettina, three children, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. I acknowledge many of them in the Speaker’s gallery today.

MRS J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI (Kingsley — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.34 pm]: It is a bittersweet moment to speak on a condolence motion about someone I knew and who was also a constituent. I met Arthur a number of years ago when I was first elected as the member for Kingsley. As many members have said today, he was a teacher and a Labor man right until the end. His daughter, Jasmine, mentioned at his service that it was very fitting that we were celebrating his life on the Monday after the federal election that had seen an impressive win for Labor and the formation of the Albanese government, but that it was sad that he was not there to talk about it and to revel in that stunning win. I also feel that way because I am sure that he would have loved to have had a chat about the election.

Arthur Tonkin was so dedicated to and passionate about democracy and Parliament that not one, but two of his marriages took place in the Parliament House gardens. As someone who had their wedding photos taken on the steps of Parliament House, I understand the pull of this place, especially around those major life moments.

As indicated earlier, Arthur was in the teaching profession before he entered politics. The same as most people who choose that profession, he remained a teacher his entire life. After politics, he was dedicated to teaching the craft and strategic skill of chess. I was recently told the story of a student whom Arthur taught from the age of nine who regularly visited him to play chess until about a year ago.

Arthur also had some thoughts about what my colleagues and I should be doing in government and what I should be doing as the local member. He had absolutely no qualms about schooling me on his thoughts whenever we chatted! We covered many topics in our discussions but his main advice to me was, “Be dinkum, be honest and keep doorknocking.” In fact, he insisted he would come doorknocking with me before the 2021 election. As he was 90, we did not think it would be a good thing for him to do, given our elections are held during the hottest part of the year. He did not doorknock with me, but he did attend my mobile office, or meet-your-member events, in Warwick. I always took a camping chair along to my mobile office events just in case no-one showed up so that I would have somewhere to sit. Of course, people always showed up, but it meant Arthur had somewhere to sit after walking from his house down to the park. He would sit and nod approvingly at me as I spoke to constituents and then give me feedback on how I had done.

As indicated, Arthur was a strong driver of and early pusher for the implementation of one vote, one value in our Parliament. He was incredibly happy to see the electoral equality bill pass. I am sure he would be very proud of what we managed to achieve, even if it took a lot longer than he would have liked.

My condolences go to Bettina and his family on their loss. To Richard, Phillip, Jasmine, Joce and Levi, he will be missed by not just you, but also our community, and certainly my office staff and me. We will miss our chats and his passionate advice.

Vale Arthur.

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [2.37 pm]: I would also like to add my condolences to Arthur's family. He is someone I met during my early years of involvement with the Labor Party. He is someone who commanded a lot of respect within the Labor Party. He was very much a conviction politician—someone who was here to make a difference, and he certainly made a very big difference. Back in that day, I remember I had a “Everyone's vote should be equal” sticker on my car. That sticker was on a lot of cars around Perth at that time. It was a cause that he and others like Mal Bryce and Bob Pearce really focused on at that time, and it was very engaging for those of us who were young and new members of the Labor Party.

My condolences to his family. His was a life well lived and he made an amazing contribution to Parliament and the state of Western Australia.

I request that all members rise and support this motion by observing a minute's silence.

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