



PARLIAMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HON DR JUDYTH WATSON, MLA

Condolence Motion



Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 13 September 2023

Reprinted from Hansard

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Condolence Motion

MR R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Premier) [12.01 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house expresses its deep regret at the death of Hon Dr Judyth Watson, a former member of the Legislative Assembly for the former electorates of Canning and Kenwick; and places on record its appreciation for her long public service, and extends deep condolences to her friends and family in their bereavement.

I begin by paying my respects to Judyth's loved ones and friends who are in the Speaker's gallery today—a gallery of stalwarts and champions! It is great to see you all here. There are many of them, which speaks volumes about Judyth's enormous contribution at both a personal and professional level.

Dr Judyth Watson set a high bar, as both a parliamentarian and a person. Judyth was born in Burton upon Trent in England in January 1940. Her innate sense of fairness and care guided her through her various vocations during her life. Indeed, her career and academic pursuits were dedicated to helping the more vulnerable members of our society and advancing the interests of those in need. It is fair to say that her influence shaped a number of policies adopted by the current WA Labor government, particularly around women's interests, workers' health and safety, Aboriginal affairs and voluntary assisted dying.

Judyth's father, Cecil Watson, was a railway train controller and clerk, and her mother, Hylda Rowland, was a shop assistant. The Watson family left England in the late 1940s and arrived in Perth when Judyth was around nine years old. After attending state primary schools, she earned a scholarship to Perth Modern School. After her schooling, Judyth began training as a nurse at Royal Perth Hospital. She furthered her nursing qualifications interstate, pursuing midwifery, hospital administration and education. She worked in various nursing positions in both Western Australia and the United Kingdom.

In the background of Judyth's nursing career was an Australian nation undergoing immense change—the twilight years of the coalition government's 23-year reign, the election of the Whitlam Labor government in 1972 and the subsequent sacking of that government in 1975. It was this sacking that prompted Judyth to join the Labor Party in 1976—yet another example of her stance on fairness. From the mid-1970s, she worked as a teacher of nurses with community health services. This was also the time that her research work began to take off. In 1977, she finished a Bachelor of Science with first class honours in anthropology, winning the faculty prize in the process. This led to Judyth receiving a commonwealth postgraduate research award that allowed her to undertake a breakthrough PhD on workers compensation matters in Western Australia. She completed her doctorate in 1982—the perfect segue into the union movement.

With a wealth of knowledge from working with patients and her research on injured workers, Judyth was appointed the first full-time occupational health and safety officer for the Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union. When the Burke Labor government was elected in 1983, Judyth was appointed as an adviser to the minister for labour. Such was her reputation in the field of occupational health and safety that the federal government appointed her as one of two state representatives on a tripartite steering committee to develop a national approach to occupational health and safety policy. Judyth subsequently became a member of the Interim National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, which was in place while such commissions were legislated and installed at the state and federal levels. This, of course, has gone through various guises over the decades and has been known as Safe Work Australia at a national level. This demonstrates that Judyth's research and commitment had a profound impact on Labor's legislative agenda, even before becoming a member of Parliament. Her impact as an academic, an adviser and a sound policy developer earned her high respect in the WA Labor Party.

In 1986, Judyth was successfully elected to the seat of Canning in the Burke Labor government. In doing so, she became the first woman with a doctorate elected to the WA Parliament—an achievement she shares with Dr Carmen Lawrence, who was also elected at the 1986 election. Judyth was a high-calibre MP who had real-life experience as a nurse and teacher, was an accomplished academic and had experience in the union movement; a person with deep compassion and an unwavering sense of fairness; and a woman who brought much-needed diversity to a Parliament that was in dire need of it. Despite such an incredible CV, matched by strong personal values, Judyth was never at ease in the sittings of Parliament. She admitted after her career that she usually found speaking in Parliament daunting—the masculine, combative working environment; the dismissive scorn and patronising comments endured by many women; and the hours and sitting times. Many of the factors combined told women:

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“You’re not welcome.” I truly hope, with this WA Labor government represented by a Legislative Assembly of more than 50 per cent women, that this is turning around. We recognise that affirmative action on boards and in preselections is the way forward, just as Judyth had flagged many years ago. She was at the forefront of many progressive ideas; she was ahead of the curve.

Judyth’s impact as a member of Parliament was immediate. She was appointed to the Public Accounts and Expenditure Review Committee. She then became the first woman to chair a select committee in the WA Parliament. As chair, she oversaw the committee’s inquiry into the Reproductive Technology Working Party’s report, and an inquiry into the national HIV/AIDS strategy white paper. It should be noted that despite her apprehension about speaking in Parliament, her contributions were known for their thorough research, detailed citations and relevant statistics. She pursued her work and beliefs with alacrity. Eventually, this culminated in her appointment to the Carmen Labor government’s cabinet as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs in a reshuffle in 1991. Later, in 1992, she was appointed Minister for Women’s Interests. In this portfolio, she was a tremendous advocate for advancing the state’s understanding and response to domestic violence—a matter that remains a scourge in our community. Judyth was proactive on this issue. Following a spate of murders in 1994, she planned and organised a phone-in for women who had experienced violence. The purpose was to gauge police responses to their calls. Working with a team of volunteers, they took more than 200 calls in one day and produced a report on the feedback received. This report altered the government’s response to such matters. It is one example of so many matters that she undertook as a minister and member of Parliament.

That work continued after her political career. She co-founded two organisations to help the vulnerable. The first was the Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees, or CARAD. CARAD remains, and it provides essential services to ensure that all people seeking safety in Australia are able to live with dignity. Since opening its doors in 2000, CARAD has provided support to more than 5 000 asylum seekers, refugees and detainees through its client services and volunteer programs. The second organisation was CASE for Refugees, a community legal service.

I know that towards the end of her career in Parliament, Judyth expressed exasperation about the pace of change, particularly in the areas of domestic violence and women’s interests. Judyth was a force for justice, and when someone is born with that sense of what is fair and what is right, change can seem glacial. Judyth’s legacy is strong. Her policies and research have left an indelible mark on Western Australia, and her influence continues to shape policy today. I know that we are heading in the right direction.

On a personal note, I was particularly saddened to hear of Judyth’s passing. I met Judyth when I was a young volunteer in the Labor Party. She was always friendly, inclusive and passionate, and she was a great guide for young members of the party as we went on our way to play our part in the great service of the WA Labor Party. She will be greatly missed.

Members: Hear, hear!

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Training) [12.10 pm]: I also rise to recognise the contribution of Dr Judyth Watson, OAM.

As the Premier reflected, members who were lucky enough to know Judyth remember her kindness, compassion, capability and unwavering commitment to a life of service. Judyth was a fierce supporter of women from all walks of life, devoting herself to uplifting and championing those around her. In her support for refugees, including those she had never met, Judyth was generous with her time, advocacy and support.

It has often been said that Judyth was a trailblazer, and I suspect that is because her life was one of firsts. I would like to reflect on some of those firsts.

Judyth was born to Hylde and Cecil Watson in Burton upon Trent, UK, on 8 March 1940. With her parents, Judyth migrated to Perth in 1949 and settled in Narrogin. In 1952, she won a scholarship to the competitive Perth Modern School. In 1957, after her junior certificate, she began working as a nursing assistant at St Anne’s hospital in Mt Lawley. She then began nursing training at Royal Perth Hospital, and she obtained first place in both her senior surgery and gynaecological exams. In 1961, she completed midwifery training at King George V Memorial Hospital in Sydney. She then went back to the UK to work in various hospitals and obtained her diploma in nursing education from the University of Edinburgh.

In 1976, like so many people, Judyth was spurred on to join the Labor Party after the dismissal of the Whitlam government. She was an active party member in those days, working on policy committees. She went on to complete a Bachelor of Science in anthropology with first-class honours at UWA in 1982. That same year, Judyth became the first full-time occupational health and safety officer at the then Federated Miscellaneous Workers’ Union. In 1983, she set to work developing national OHS policy and legislation.

In 1986, she was elected to Parliament as the member for Canning. In 1989, she transferred to become the first member for the newly created electorate of Kenwick. On 15 November 1988, she became the first woman to chair a select committee here in the Legislative Assembly when she was appointed chair of the Select Committee on the Human Reproductive Technology Act 1991 working party’s report. With Dr Carmen Lawrence, she shares

the distinction of being the first woman with a doctorate elected to the WA Parliament. Her parliamentary career included being Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, Women's Interests and Seniors, and shadow Minister for Women's Interests, Disability Services, Children's Policy, Seniors, Housing and Consumer Affairs. Judyth narrowly lost her seat in 1996, following electorate redistribution and the creation of the new electorate of Southern River.

Much work and many accolades followed, including being WA Senior Australian of the Year in 2014 and awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in 2019.

Although these points illustrate her impressive career, as members will know, Judyth was a fierce supporter of women, both inside and outside the Labor Party. She was relentless in her campaigning for equality for women and for their reproductive rights, and she strongly believed in championing women into leadership positions, particularly in politics. In her 1995 Parliamentary reflections, Judyth lamented the lack of women in Parliament, writing —

In June 1995 I moved in the Assembly that a Select Committee of both Houses be appointed to identify impediments to women standing for Parliament and to assess how Parliament itself might be a hindrance to women. The intention of the motion was to inquire into Parliament as a working environment for all women who work there. Had the motion been fully debated and the committee established, we would have explored the motivations of women who aspire to a parliamentary career.

Although that committee never eventuated, she went on to say that she remained committed to encouraging women to be elected, believing that a career in Parliament would be easier for women once the critical mass of 35 per cent was achieved. I know that, in the years since she made those remarks, Judyth was pleased that more women are now in this place than men. I am pleased that we have well and truly passed that critical mass. With the recent success of Magenta Marshall, who was elected as the member for Rockingham, this place now has more women than men for the first time in history. Judyth was ever ready to support women in their campaigns. She gently guided and cheered on Lisa O'Malley in her first campaign, and continued to offer advice and a warm chat to anyone who needed it on the hustings.

She championed women in Parliament and politics, and she was just as tireless in her support of those outside politics. In 2000, Judyth became a founding member of the Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees, or CARAD—as the Premier mentioned—and she went on to support many Afghan refugees. One Afghan family was Zubida's. Zubida's family, after the murder of her father, came by boat to Indonesia and was then taken to Christmas Island and placed in a detention centre. In 2000, Zubida, her mother and her four siblings, some of whom are in the chamber with us today, were released and sent to Perth. It was there that they met Judyth, whose presence would change their lives as much as they changed Judyth's. In a newspaper article, Zubida reflected on the first time she and her family met Judyth —

A tall, mature woman with white hair and blue eyes met my family. She spoke to us in a foreign language, English, which none of us understood. She was the volunteer who had been delegated by a community group, CARAD (Centre for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Detainees), to help us settle into a house in Beaconsfield.

She was kind and friendly, she wasn't there to lock us up again. Her warm, friendly smile said it all.

Judyth would go on to be a mainstay at events in the children's lives—birthdays, sleepovers and school assemblies. It is no surprise that Judyth, after a shocking diagnosis, was able to spend her last months surrounded by family and friends, because she herself was a friend to so many.

Some of these insights highlight Judyth's career, but I know of many more examples of her quiet and effective contributions and her very practical way of helping to change people's lives. Early on, in my capacity as the member for Fremantle, I remember her work as a reader-helper, supporting children at Palmyra Primary School. I know many in this place have their own memories of Judyth.

She was a fierce believer in women's reproductive rights. When Judyth was elected in 1989, she blamed the lack of discussion on abortion, saying in this place —

Reproductive issues and rights must be recognised as a critical part of overall general health and a key element of health care ... Abortion should be decriminalised ...

Unfortunately, Judyth will not be here to see our government's historic abortion reform become law, but I am told that in her final months she was pleased to see us introduce it to this place.

In 1994, Judyth released a book called *We Hold up Half the Sky: The Voices of Western Australian ALP Women in Parliament*. It is fair to say that Judyth helped many of us. She will be missed.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [12.19 pm]: Judyth Watson's contribution to the Parliament of Western Australia was immense, and her contribution beyond this place immeasurable. She was untiring and unwavering in her efforts to better the lives of those who came to this country to seek refuge and for many others who needed help to overcome disadvantage. She was a champion of many, and opened her heart and her door to those in need.

I first met Judyth far away from this place, at Palmyra Primary School, around 2012. Judyth was a classroom volunteer and I was a “Pally Primary” mum. I recall a tall, elegant woman who brought her natural calmness, kindness, warmth and patience into the classroom as a reader helper assisting and encouraging generations of students, including my son, to gain confidence in their reading and in themselves. Judyth extended this same generosity to me many years later when I was running for the seat of Bicton. When I felt so very out of my depth in what was then a very foreign political world, she was always there with a kind word and a cup of tea in her lovely cosy home in Palmyra. I would like to share the following words of Palmyra Primary School teacher Kellie Kerr —

Judyth was an extremely dedicated member of the Palmyra community. She volunteered in my classroom at Palmyra Primary for over 10 years. During this time, Judyth would come once a week (rain hail or shine) to support children with the development of their reading skills. She worked with a variety of children including those who required additional tuition to master their phonics knowledge and ran a ‘book club’ those who required extension and discussion around content and vocabulary.

Judyth also helped to enlighten many students about the plight of refugees coming to Australia and the need to be empathetic. She allowed the children to interview her, and this helped them understand the background of many of our refugees. Judyth particularly liked it when the children would stop and say hi to her when they saw her at the local shops or in the street! During our time working together Judyth and I formed a great friendship. I loved our chats, cherished her wisdom and enjoyed her sense of humour immensely. Judyth only stopped coming due to COVID.

I personally extend my sincere condolences to Judyth’s family and friends, and thank them for the support, love and care they gave Judyth throughout her life and particularly in her final weeks.

Vale, Judyth Watson.

MR R.S. LOVE (Moore — Leader of the Opposition) [12.22 pm]: I rise to support the Premier’s motion of condolence for Dr Judyth Watson, OAM, distinguished member of this Assembly and an exemplary servant of the state.

Born in Burton-on-Trent, England, in 1940, Dr Watson made Australia her home at the tender age of nine. As a product of Perth Modern School, and with roots as a nurse, she later pursued academic excellence, earning both a Bachelor of Science degree and a PhD focused on workers compensation.

Her political journey began in 1986 when she was elected for Labor to represent the electorate of Canning in the Western Australian Legislative Assembly. Notably, she, alongside Dr Carmen Lawrence, made history as one of the first female members of this Parliament to hold a PhD. Dr Watson’s commitment to representing and advocating for her constituents was evident in her continued service, transitioning to represent the electorate of Kenwick after the dissolution of Canning, and subsequently standing for the electorate of Southern River. Dr Watson’s leadership extended beyond the confines of the electorates she served. In 1991, she was entrusted with the portfolios of Aboriginal affairs; multicultural and ethnic affairs; and seniors, serving under Premier Carmen Lawrence. She further championed women’s rights and concerns when she was appointed as Minister for Seniors and Women’s Interests in 1992, a testament to her dedication to equity and justice. Beyond her political career, her contributions to the community of Western Australia and her unwavering dedication to social justice were recognised when she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2019.

Today, as we reflect upon her life and achievements, we honour not just a politician, but a trailblazer, an advocate and a cherished member of the Western Australian community. Our thoughts extend to her family, her friends and her colleagues here today and all those who had the privilege of knowing her both personally and professionally. Judyth Watson, OAM, leaves behind a legacy of service, commitment and dedication to the people of Western Australia. May her memory inspire us all to serve with the same passion and purpose.

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.24 pm]: I also rise to contribute to the Premier’s condolence motion regarding Dr Judyth Watson, OAM. Dr Judyth Watson made a significant contribution to Parliament over three terms, including two years as a minister in the Lawrence government, and devoted her working life and retirement to the nursing profession and to the causes in which she so strongly believed. As we have already heard, the community of Western Australia and the broader community are clearly better for it.

Born in Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, in Britain in 1940, daughter of a railway employee, Judyth Watson migrated to Western Australia with her family in 1949. Clearly a bright student, she completed her education at Perth Modern School to the age of 15, and worked as a nursing assistant before training as a nurse at Royal Perth Hospital from 1957 to 1960, topping the exams in senior surgery and gynaecology. She gained further qualifications at London’s King George VI Hospital and the Australian College of Nursing, also gaining a certificate in nursing education from the University of Edinburgh from 1971 to 1973. Returning to the Royal Perth Hospital School of Nursing from 1973 to 1974, Judyth then worked in community health services and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital until 1977. From 1976 to 1977, she gained a Bachelor of Science degree, with first class honours from

the University of Western Australia. From 1978 until 1981, she was a part-time tutor and PhD student at the University of Western Australia's department of anthropology, gaining her doctorate in 1982 from a thesis on workers compensation in Western Australia.

Having joined the Australian Labor Party in 1976, Judyth worked as the health and safety research officer for the Hospital Service and Miscellaneous Workers' Union in 1982 and 1983. After the election of the Burke government in 1983, she served until 1985 as ministerial adviser to Hon Des Dans, MLC, Minister for Industrial Relations. She deserves much of the credit for the adoption of the new occupational health and safety legislation in 1984, despite reported bureaucratic resistance. In 1987, the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Amendment Bill was finally passed.

Judyth Watson successfully gained Labor preselection for the district of Canning at the 1986 election, a seat formerly held by the late Tom Bateman for 18 years. Canning had covered different parts of the southern metropolitan area for over 80 years, and by then comprised the suburbs of Ferndale, Lynwood, Langford, Cannington, Beckenham and Kenwick. Dr Watson retained Canning with a majority of 5 447 votes, a 65.8 per cent result equalling that of the popular retiring member.

In 1986, both Judyth Watson and Carmen Lawrence were the first women with doctorates to be elected to the Legislative Assembly. In her first speech she stressed the importance of employee participation in creating a safer working environment and the great value of a multipurpose community house in Langford. A redistribution renamed the seat Kenwick, shifting it eastward and northward for the 1989 election. In a tighter overall climate, Judyth was re-elected with a majority of 2 324, at 56.9 per cent. For two years from February 1991, she served in the Lawrence government as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Seniors; Multicultural Affairs; Assisting the Minister for Women's Interests before becoming the minister in 1992. At the 1993 election she retained Kenwick by 1 500 votes, at 54.0 per cent of the total.

In opposition she was shadow minister for several portfolios, notably disability services and women's interests, campaigning for a stronger response to domestic violence. Earlier in 1990, she had organised a cross-party women's network for Amnesty International, drawing urgent attention to the persecution and killing of women who had spoken out against oppressive regimes. In the mid-1990s, she organised practical assistance for female Bosnian refugees.

A more extensive redistribution replaced Kenwick with the new district of Southern River, pivoting from Gosnells and Huntingdale, west and south to Canning Vale, Jandakot and Oakford. At the December 1996 election, a further swing of 4.1 per cent resulted in her loss of this now-marginal seat by 660 votes, or 48.5 per cent.

On leaving Parliament, Judyth returned to her role as a health educator, with three contracts with the Hepatitis Council. She spent five years heading the Council of Official Visitors, protecting the rights of involuntary patients, before retiring from paid work in 2008. She continued to devote her voluntary efforts to the advancement of women in public life, and to the welfare of refugees from 2000. She was a founder of the Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees. In 2002 she helped found the community legal service CASE for Refugees, serving as a board member of the Refugee Council of Australia from 2009 to 2013. She gave of herself most generously in assisting Afghan and other refugees on their path to citizenship.

In retirement she volunteered to assist with literacy and numeracy at a local primary school, which was allied to her continued efforts to encourage girls to undertake higher education and professional careers. She was a finalist for the Western Australia Senior Australian of the Year in 2015, and in 2019 she was awarded a Medal in the Order of Australia for service to the community of WA and for social justice.

We express our deep sympathy to the family, the many friends of Judyth Watson in the Labor movement and the wider community, to whom she made such a generous and unselfish contribution. She leaves an extraordinary legacy, which we can all learn from.

MR T.J. HEALY (Southern River — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.31 pm]: I rise to acknowledge the passing of and life service of Hon Dr Judyth Watson, OAM. Judyth was my friend and mentor, and the first Labor candidate to stand for Southern River. She was our member of the Legislative Assembly at a time of incredible growth and transformation. What was one seat then, now covers at least 10 Legislative Assembly districts across the south east corridor, including Cannington, Armadale, parts of Darling Range, Thornlie, Riverton, Forrestfield, Jandakot and Southern River. I stand on her shoulders as the local member, continuing the work she began.

She loved Lisa O'Malley as a local member and was very proud when Lisa came doorknocking at her door as a candidate. We hosted Judyth here in the previous term of Parliament, and she was happy to come to question time and see the 40 members of a Labor government then in this chamber. I had a lovely message from her the day before the 2021 election and she was overjoyed to see 53 Labor members in this chamber. Interestingly, the 2021 election was the first time since 1996 that her electorate was fully represented by Labor members. I acknowledge the former MLAs and community leaders in the Speaker's gallery today.

Judyth always helped everyone. This began well before she had an office as a member of Parliament. It continued when she was the MLA. Her office was open to everyone. That help did not stop when she was no longer a member

of Parliament. Her continuous advocacy for any vulnerable person and any person who needed guidance through public policy and bureaucracy is a lesson to every MLA about what the core business of our electorate offices, staff, and our role as a members of Parliament should be. She never stopped advocating. The power of a letter and the power of a written request to help someone else should never be forgotten.

She understood, and certainly taught me, the power of a letter as a query from a concerned citizen or an MLA to a minister or director general or a parliamentary liaison officer, and how it can make a difference. There were letters for state housing, for migration and humanitarian visas, medical support, access to education and TAFE courses for citizens and new migrants and refugees, and access for those who cannot always access what they need. Those were regularly written for 40 years, not only during the 10 years that she was the MLA for my community. No-one was turned away; no case was too hard. Judyth genuinely tried to help each person, each constituent and each family with each issue.

Judyth was a Perth Modern School graduate—many of the families in my electorate aspire to go to Perth Modern—and then a nurse at Royal Perth Hospital, like many people in my electorate. She served in many roles. I found out at her funeral that she was on same ship from the UK as Yvonne Henderson, another Gosnells MLA, as ten-pound Poms many years ago.

She worked for the Missos, now the United Workers Union, fighting for her future constituents as our union's first full-time occupational health and safety officer. She showed a lifelong commitment to social justice, combating domestic violence, promoting public policy action on combating tobacco and asbestos companies, and directing what governments and departments should do. She fought for reproductive and abortion rights for families. In my recent speech on abortion law reform I said, and will say again, that the health bill that has gone through our chamber and is now in the upper house, continues the work begun many years ago by Judyth and her proud colleagues.

Judyth wrote and published her thoughts as a guide for all of us to follow in her absence. I acknowledge our Parliamentary Library which holds all the documents I am about to go through, for future generations to access. Her groundbreaking 1981 thesis was about the work she had done on workers compensation. She then worked for the federal Minister for Industrial Relations, tirelessly promoting how less disease and fewer accidents and injuries can keep people safe—an odd concept then. In the 1970s and 1980s she advanced that companies investing in their workforce and safety was in their business' interests. This is part of the story of why workers compensation is an accepted standard in Western Australian workplaces today.

In 1995, as the shadow Minister for Disability Services, she wrote the report *We do without*. The report discusses the additional costs for a person with a disability and their family. Many of those ideas have been progressed, but there is still more to do. Judyth compiled and edited the 1994 book, *We hold up half the sky*. The book celebrated and emphasised the contributions of all women in Parliament, and the progressive cause. In her introduction, she wrote —

This book provides information about all twenty two of us —

So far —

who have been privileged to be endorsed by the Australian Labor Party and then elected to represent our constituents. It should be regarded as a text book and a history ...

As this book goes to press Carmen Lawrence is contesting the Federal seat of Fremantle and Michelle Roberts is contesting the state seat of Glendalough in by-elections. We trust their speeches will start a second and substantial volume of *We Hold up Half the Sky*.

There could be many more volumes because of the work that she has done. As Premier Cook stated, David Black and Harry Phillips gave one of the best compliments and endorsement that an MLA can receive, which is —

An active parliamentarian who spoke on many issues, her speeches were invariably the product of exemplary research involving a scrutiny of relevant reports and all known literature on each topic, and with the statistical soundness of assertions being carefully evaluated.

That is something I continue to aspire to. Her 1999 reflections stated —

Parliaments are not representative of the community, the most glaring deficiency being gender imbalance. My view that the working environment of Parliament is most woman-unfriendly is shared by many men as well as women. The sitting times and hours, as well as traditions, preclude participation in intelligent and rational debate...

The structure, traditions and ethos of the WA Parliament remain masculine and resistant to change, or even to review...

There are no issues that cannot be addressed by a woman. As a woman member one does not, and could not, deal exclusively with women's issues. But, in my view, women have a duty to bring our perspective, style and experience to our work; to policy development, to decision-making and to working with individuals and communities. This will serve men as well as women and children better.

She continued —

In June 1995, I moved in the Assembly that a select committee of both Houses be appointed to identify impediments to women standing for Parliament and to assess how Parliament itself might be a hindrance to women.

...

Increasingly, girls and young women see politics as a legitimate career ... and are structuring their education and work decisions accordingly. Despite my reservations and my perceptions of the Parliament and its processes, I think women who are prepared to work on issues important to the community are well able to make a difference.

I conclude this part with Judyth's words —

I remain committed to encouraging women to be elected and I believe that once the 'critical mass' of 35 per cent is achieved, a parliamentary career will be much easier for individual women.

In this chamber today, as the minister said, the election of the member for Rockingham has achieved one more goal of Judyth's, with 50 per cent of women serving in this chamber—more women than men for the first time.

Judyth established a cross-party women's network of Amnesty International in the Western Australian Parliament, a parliamentary friends group that the member for Bicton and I are talking about resurrecting and continuing in Judyth's name. She was the Senior Australian of the Year in 2014 as a refugee and health advocate. She volunteered at schools, reading to children. Each day counted and she made every day of her life mean something to the people who needed her. I acknowledge Seaforth Primary School in the public gallery today, which was one of her primary schools and is now one of mine.

Judyth passed away peacefully in her home. She asked to die with dignity at home and she got her wish. We all played a part in this chamber when the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019 was voted on and passed. That work began when Judyth Watson helped to progress the 1990s Right to Die Bill, which was introduced into this chamber by Ian Taylor. Judyth led that debate, but it did not proceed to a third reading or to the Legislative Council because of the issues of that era. It was said at her funeral that when she had her final diagnosis, Judyth was not concerned that her life would conclude. She was worried about the families that she was supporting and what would happen to their cases and their support. I offer my office and my support whenever it is needed.

Judyth's funeral was well attended by many members of the community and people from around Western Australia, including her friends and family, as well as WA government Labor ministers serving and retired—a true progressive and Labor royalty list, as well as an amazing reflection of the diversity of the people whom she served and helped every day. On all their behalf, we say thank you to Judyth. We hope to make you proud as we now carry on the work that you began and have shown us how to follow. On behalf of a grateful community, we say thank you, Judyth.

Members: Hear, hear!

MS M.M. QUIRK (Landsdale) [12.42 pm]: I will be very brief. The member for Southern River is a very hard act to follow, but I want to make a couple of comments about Dr Judyth Watson. As we have all heard today, over the years, she has selflessly touched many lives. I got to know Dr Watson personally as a policy officer in the Dowding government—then, of course, through the party, and finally, I had contact with her in her voluntary work as a local member covering Girrawheen, Balga and Mirrabooka at the time, which all had a very high migrant and refugee population. I also acknowledge Judyth's former colleagues who fought shoulder to shoulder with her in the good fight. It is a testament to how much she was valued and respected that they are all here today.

Dr Watson was someone of great dignity and great style. She had a fierce intellect but at the same time had a humility that is somewhat uncharacteristic in our profession. We have also heard, of course, that she was a person of great compassion and kindness. I have to say that her commitment to refugees and migrants was very evident in my dealings with her. Of course, she also had a great love and respect of and commitment to First Nations people. I am just thankful that she is not around to hear some of the mean-spirited debate that we are having to endure at the moment.

Judyth was a person of unwavering dedication and commitment, as we have also heard, and she will be fondly remembered.

Vale, Judyth Watson.

Members: Hear, hear!

THE SPEAKER (Mrs M.H. Roberts) [12.44 pm]: Judyth Watson was one of the most remarkable, intelligent and compassionate members that I have had the privilege to serve in this chamber with. She touched the lives of so many. She saved the lives of so many. I do not say that lightly. She saved and touched the lives of people whom she knew well and got to know well, but she also saved and touched the lives of so many other people through the work that she did, be that her work in occupational health and safety or her absolute dedication to dealing with

children and women in situations of domestic violence and danger. She worked out systems to change the law. The member for Southern River alluded to her work in occupational health and safety. I got to know more about that work when I worked in that agency back in 1993, before I became a member of Parliament. It is hard to understand now, but it was a really novel concept to have employees sitting at the table with employers, talking about safe systems at work and about preventing death, injury, illness and disease in the workplace—all things that were eminently preventable. Today, we have had another reminder of a death in the workplace. But if we look overall at the rates of death, injury and disease in all kinds of workplaces right across our state now compared with what they were a decade or two or three ago, we see those changes. The results are there to be seen. Lives have been saved. There are people who have not been injured in the workplace because of the work of people like Judyth, who had that novel idea: let us put the workers at the table. Let us put the employees at the table. Let us sit with them and work out how we can get safer systems and protections in place. We are able to do that in every workplace.

My first seat in this chamber was somewhere near where the member for Hillarys is sitting. It was between Judyth Watson and Fred Riebeling. Yes, Fred liked a joke. Although we are being very serious about Judyth today, Judyth liked a joke, as well. Judyth was a lot of fun. She was an incredible woman. I was very fortunate to have had that as my first seat in this place, and to sit next to Judyth, who was truly remarkable. I already knew Judyth well before then, having been kind of foisted onto our East Metropolitan Region campaign, and having to then take leave from the public service in order to campaign for East Metro. Hon Nick Griffiths and I spent a fair bit of time on about three separate East Metro campaigns, including going doorknocking with Judyth. Our only problem doorknocking with Judyth was that she found it difficult to have a short conversation with people. She could not just be businesslike, give them a card, win their vote and move on to the next door. She was so intensely interested in people that Nick and I might have doorknocked the rest of the street before she got three houses in! We had to give her a bit of encouragement to perhaps take a note of the issue and go back and deal with it at length after the election, we suggested, so that she could do some more doorknocking!

I have talked about how Judyth touched the lives and had the respect of so many people. The member for Southern River alluded to it. There was an enormous crowd at her service at Fremantle Cemetery. People spoke about Judyth. We often learn more about someone at their funeral. I certainly learnt more about Judyth's early life at that point. The celebrant at her funeral was none other than Ann Carnley, the wife of former Archbishop—if you do become former; I am not sure—Peter Carnley, who did the final commendation. It was no surprise to me to see so many current and former colleagues, current and former ministers, and, indeed, former Premiers there.

It was certainly no surprise to see former Labor Premiers there, but sitting alongside me was former Liberal Premier Richard Court. I think that speaks volumes about Judyth and the respect she held right across this chamber and Parliament. On top of that, it went from the highest levels of Parliament and society down to people who arrived in our country with nothing very recently. Judyth was there for those people and those people were also there for her service at Fremantle Cemetery.

One of the various challenges faced and Judyth's compassionate talking with people was evident in 1994. I was elected in March and I think it was in about August or September because it was cold in here. We had no air conditioning. I saw Yvonne Henderson sitting in the gallery. Yvonne wore UGG boots in here on occasion, very discreetly. Our female Hansard reporters were required to wear skirts or dresses. They were not permitted to wear trousers. An edict went out but I think one or two of them wore trousers to take the *Hansard*. It was cold. It made sense to me. They were elegant trouser suits, with matching jackets. The then chief of Hansard said that the dignity of this place meant they must wear a skirt or a dress. It was difficult for people in that position to take up the issue, so Judyth took it up. She spoke to all of us along with other members at the time and women across the Parliament. Judyth and others organised us all to wear trousers to work on a particular day as a sign of solidarity. It was mainly Labor members, but I also remember Cheryl Edwardes on the Liberal side. There was probably about a dozen of us and we all stood on the front steps in our trousers. Now I think: how can it be just 29 years ago we were even having that kind of argument?

I added that just to give members a bit of a sense of the levity and fullness of Judyth Watson's character. It is another testament to her really having a genuine empathy with other people and taking up issues on their behalf. I sincerely say that she really was one of the most remarkable women and most intelligent and compassionate women whom I have met, and certainly one of the most remarkable, compassionate and intelligent members of Parliament to have served in this place.

Vale, Judyth Watson.

My sympathy to all her friends and family. I am sure they all know that they are very blessed to have had Judyth in their lives.

I request all members to rise for one minute's silence in order to carry the motion.

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