

HON HYWEL (DAVID) EVANS

Condolence Motion

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [2.01 pm] — without notice: I move —

That this house records its sincere regret at the death of Hon Hywel (David) Evans and tenders its deep sympathy to his family.

Today the Assembly acknowledges the passing of a long-serving member of this chamber, Hon Hywel David Evans, former member for Warren. I would like to acknowledge the family and friends of David who are here in the chamber today for this event. From a glance at the guest list, it is probably one of the biggest turnouts of family and friends I have ever seen for a condolence motion. There are far too many names to mention, but I would like to acknowledge David's children, who are here today, Michael, Megan and Claire; their partners; and David's grandchildren.

David was born in Penygraig, in the south of Wales, in December 1924. His parents were Tudor and Tydfil. At a young age, he immigrated to Western Australia and was educated in the south west at Pemberton State School and Bunbury High School. Education had some impact on Dave, as he began to make moves to become a teacher, serving as what was known as a monitor teacher in Pemberton in 1942. This was the time of the Second World War. In January 1943, at the age of 18, like many of his generation, David enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force. David served in aircrew as a gunner—a machine gun operator. He served in the Northern Territory and New Guinea and undertook a range of operational flights in the last year or so of the war. He reached the rank of warrant officer and was discharged from the Air Force shortly after the end of hostilities in the Pacific. I might add that that was a very, very brave thing to do. Serving in an aircrew was one of the most dangerous and deadliest things to do, and serving over the seas to our north in particular took a very brave person.

After the war, Dave went to Claremont Teachers College, before embarking on a career as an educator. He taught in places like Bakers Hill, Capel River and Pemberton, before becoming deputy headmaster of Pemberton Junior High School in 1958 and then senior master of Manjimup Senior High School in 1963. It was during this time that Dave was building his life in the south west. He married Betty June Rice in January 1952 in Manjimup. He was involved in Labor politics during this period. He served as president of the Pemberton branch from 1956 to 1962 and was the Manjimup branch's delegate to the state executive from 1967 to 1971. In 1968, he would take his next step in public life by running for the seat of Warren, replacing the retiring member, Mr Joseph Rowberry, who had served in that electorate for the previous decade.

The seat of Warren was then over 4 000 square miles of territory, encompassing the Shires of Manjimup, Denmark and Nannup. In those days, the focus in that area was on timber and agriculture and, increasingly, tourism, as it is now. Those were the voices that Dave Evans took to Parliament in his inaugural speech, raising the plight of small farmers, the dairy industry and a falling regional population. He also spoke about the promise of tourism in the area, with the completion of the sealing of Eyre Highway leading to a predicted increase in the number of caravans making the trip to the south west. His inaugural speech makes for very interesting reading about the issues of the day. Obviously, at that time, agriculture was far more regulated than it is now, and he clearly had a very good knowledge of agriculture and the boards and committees that ran the various agriculture industries in the south west. He also had the idea, which I think was quite novel or revolutionary for its time, of having an Aboriginal cultural centre, where the sale of paintings, sculptures and artefacts made by Aboriginal people could be undertaken to promote Aboriginal people and also tourism. He also raised the issue—as incredible as it may seem now—of sealing the highway to the east. I have heard stories of how it used to be unsealed and clearly in 1968 it was still unsealed, so he raised that prescient issue that he wanted to be resolved so that the Western Australian tourism industry could be the beneficiary.

Dave would have a successful parliamentary career. With the election of the Tonkin government in 1971, Dave Evans was appointed Minister for Lands; Agriculture; Immigration, and, later, Minister for Forests after a reshuffle. Out of government, he would serve as Deputy Leader of the Opposition twice—once under Colin Jamieson and then under Ron Davies. Dave would go on to serve in the Burke government as Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Wildlife, as Assisting Minister for Forests, and as Assisting Minister for Conservation and Land Management. He left the ministry after the 1986 election and retired from Parliament at the 1989 state election.

Following his departure from Parliament, he lived an active public life. He was president of the Lower South West Football League and chairman of the Karri-D'Entrecasteaux National Park Advisory Committee of the then Department of Conservation and Land Management, amongst other advisory committees. He was chairman of the Manjimup Motorcycle Club, cofounder of the Manjimup Art Society, and member of the boards of Pemberton and Manjimup Hospitals, the Manjimup Historical Society and the Pemberton and Manjimup golf clubs. He published

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two books, titled *Lookouts of the Karri Country* and *Southern Sketches: A Tale of the Development of the Warren and Nearby Districts*. His public life was recognised well by the broader community.

He received an Order of Australia in recognition of his service to the Western Australian Parliament and to agriculture more generally, and was an honorary freeman of the Shire of Manjimup. Possibly most importantly, he received acknowledgement as the namesake of the Dave Evans Bicentennial Tree in Warren National Park, a lookout tree accessible to the public with a 60 metre climb over 130 pegs. It was quite generously named after him by the then Liberal government in recognition of his 20 years of service to the people of Warren.

I think it is very clear that Dave Evans lived a big, generous life. He was loved by his family and respected by his community. In his first speech to Parliament, he closed by thanking the people of Warren. He was extremely proud and humble that they had seen fit to elect him as their parliamentary representative. He further said —

Their confidence is deeply touching and I only hope I am worthy of the trust they have placed in me.

I believe Dave Evans did that and more. I did not know Dave Evans, because he was before my time, but by all accounts, and certainly from what I have heard—I know that the member for Mandurah was a friend of his—he was one of those people who grew up in a difficult era and served in wartime in incredibly demanding roles and went on to use his skills and abilities to the benefit of the community and public life. Those sorts of people are very good people and very valuable to our state.

In closing, I pass on my regards to his family and friends.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Leader of the Opposition) [2.09 pm]: On behalf of the Liberal opposition, I rise to pay respects to Hon David Evans in this condolence motion. Dave Evans served the people of the south west and the state with dedication, humility and kindness—as a teacher, as the Legislative Assembly member for Warren, and as Minister for Agriculture in two separate governments. He was born in December 1924 in the Rhondda Valley of south Wales, his father being a boilermaker and commercial traveller. The Evans family migrated to Western Australia, where he was educated at Pemberton State School and Bunbury High School.

Dave Evans was clearly set on a teaching career, serving in 1942 as a monitor teacher at Pemberton before enlisting in the RAAF soon after his eighteenth birthday. As air crew, he reached the rank of warrant officer, serving in the Northern Territory and the south west Pacific. Following his discharge, he trained at Claremont Teachers College in 1946 and would later complete a bachelor's degree at the University of Western Australia. As a young teacher, he served successively at Bakers Hill, Capel River and Mt Barker, where he was regional supervisor of Junior Farmers from 1949 to 1950. From 1951, he taught in Pemberton, serving as deputy headmaster of Pemberton Junior High School from 1958 to 1963, when he became senior master at Manjimup Senior High School.

Dave Evans' community involvement included membership of the Pemberton and Manjimup hospital boards and of the Manjimup Historical Society. From their marriage in Manjimup in January 1952, Dave and Betty Evans were a deeply respected couple, with Mrs Betty Evans being one of a dedicated group of nurses who were instrumental in providing extended care to people of all ages, especially the elderly.

Dave Evans also joined the Australian Labor Party, serving as president of the Pemberton branch from 1956 to 1962, and subsequently of the Manjimup branch, and was a state executive delegate from 1967 to 1971. Dave Evans was endorsed by the Australian Labor Party to contest the district of Warren at the 1968 general election. This seat comprised the Shires of Manjimup, Nannup and Denmark and had been held by Labor since its creation in 1950. Dave Evans was elected comfortably with an absolute majority of 609 votes—over 55 per cent of the poll. In his first speech, he detailed his concerns for the economic position of small farmers and orchardists, displaying his detailed knowledge of the seat and characteristically noting the “tolerance and willingness to help” from both sides of the house. After three years, in 1971 he was re-elected with an unprecedented absolute majority of 2 532 votes—71 per cent. Clearly, he had received the votes of farmers as well as timber workers in this massive endorsement.

With the election of the Tonkin government, he became Minister for Lands, Agriculture, Immigration and Forests until the 1974 election. Despite the addition of the Shire of Bridgetown to his seat in place of Denmark, he retained an absolute majority of 272—52 per cent—against Liberal and National opponents. From then on, with 1983 being the only exception, the Liberal and National Parties would outpoll Labor in the district of Warren in the concurrent Legislative Council elections, and also in federal elections. Dave Evans' personal standing was now crucial to his party's retention of Warren. His personal popularity was most evident at the 1977 election, when a further redistribution included the Shire of Boyup Brook, and the Court government gained an increased majority. A Liberal win in Warren had seemed highly possible but his absolute majority increased to 624—53.9 per cent of the vote. In the subsequent elections of 1980 and 1983, he had very comfortable majorities, exceeding 60 per cent of the vote.

In nine years of opposition, Dave Evans was the spokesman for agriculture, and also lands and forests after 1980. He was elected deputy leader of the Australian Labor Party, and of the Labor opposition in 1976 when the late Ron Davies became leader, but lost the position to the late Mal Bryce after the 1977 election before regaining it in 1980. These seesawing contests simply reflected the rivalry between his younger colleagues, Mal Bryce and Brian Burke, who joined forces to emerge as leader and deputy in September 1981. However, after the 1983 election, Dave Evans again served as Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Wildlife—one of only two ministers in the Burke government who had previously held office under John Tonkin. It has been stated that he had threatened to resign from cabinet if the forestry industry so crucial to Warren was not adequately protected. In his final election in 1986, Dave Evans secured a majority of 200 votes—51.2 per cent—in the face of a rural anti-government swing and afterwards stood down from cabinet. With the loss of his personal vote on his retirement at the 1989 election, Warren was easily captured by Liberal candidate Paul Omodei.

Retirement from Parliament did not end Dave Evans' service to government and the community. In 1989, he chaired a working party to determine the future of the Midland livestock saleyards. From 1988 to 1994, he chaired the Karri-D'Entrecasteaux National Parks Advisory Committee for the Department of Conservation and Land Management and, from 1998, was a member of the Shannon-D'Entrecasteaux National Parks Advisory Committee. This same expert local knowledge led him to chair the Windy Harbour Advisory Committee on behalf of the Shire of Manjimup for a decade after 1988—efforts that ensured the retention of Windy Harbour as a settlement, and also preserved the huts at the mouth of the Donnelly River.

Dave Evans published two valuable studies of local history in 1993, the same year that he was awarded membership of the Order of Australia. In another fitting tribute, Paul Omodei, MLA, and others secured the assistance of CALM's Conservator of Forests, Syd Shea, to rename the local bicentennial tree the Dave Evans Bicentennial Tree. In retirement in Mandurah, Dave Evans gave his customary dedicated service to the University of the Third Age, furthering knowledge of history and current events. To quote the tribute from his granddaughter Caroline Evans —

We come into the world with a hope that we'll leave it a better place, and he most certainly did.

Mrs Betty Evans predeceased Dave Evans—the end of a long and happy marriage. We express our sympathy to their son, Michael; their daughters, Megan and Claire; and their families.

Hon Hywel David Evans, AM, MLA for Warren 1968–89, Deputy Leader of the Opposition from 1976–77 and 1980–81, and minister from 1971–74 and 1983–86.

These notes were prepared for me by a life member of the Liberal Party, Mr Jeremy Buxton, who has added a personal note that I would like to include in *Hansard* —

In 1999 I was invited along with the late Professor Martyn Webb to present the NO Case in the Republic Referendum to the Mandurah University of the Third Age. Dave Evans was a most thoughtful and courteous host. We were also invited to lunch at Dave and Betty's home in Halls Head—very kind indeed. They had just acquired a small dog simply because its elderly lady owner was dying of cancer and had asked them to take it in. They were a delightful couple—no wonder Liberal supporters in Warren could and did vote for Dave Evans.

They voted for him in droves.

On behalf of the state Parliamentary Liberal Party, we offer our condolences to Dave's family. I acknowledge the many family members and friends who have made the trip to Parliament today in honour of Dave Evans and to hear the condolence motions offered on behalf of members in this house.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren-Blackwood) [2.18 pm]: On behalf of the Nationals WA, I rise to make a contribution to this condolence motion for Hon Dave Evans, former member for Warren. I express our sincerest condolences to his family and friends, especially to Michael, Megan and Claire, and to Dave's grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I also acknowledge Dave's late wife, Betty, who excelled at being the wife of a politician—a challenge indeed. Prior to entering politics, Dave was a teacher. Before I speak about his parliamentary career, I wish to acknowledge the tremendous impact he had on young minds in the 1960s. Speaking to people at the funeral service for Dave Evans, it was surprising the number who fondly remembered Mr Evans as their high school teacher and spoke of him with such high respect. People who are now in their 60s spoke about the positive influence that Mr Evans had on their lives and how they admired his intellect and the way he encouraged inquisitive thinking.

It is evident that Mr Evans' contribution to the region and the state started well before he entered Parliament. As we have heard, Dave was elected as the member for Warren in 1968 until he retired in 1989, serving for 21 years. He served as deputy leader of the WA Labor Party and held ministerial positions in both the Tonkin and

Burke governments. Dave held a variety of portfolios at different times during his political career, including lands; agriculture; immigration; forests; fisheries and wildlife; and conservation and land management. As well as being a dedicated, long-serving member of his party, Dave was well respected by members on both sides of the house. He was a man of integrity and popular within the Warren electorate, where many people knew him by his nickname, “Taffy”. Dave was a quiet listener and interested in other people. He was also a doer and involved in many organisations. He was willing to have a go, and always acknowledged other people for their contributions. Dave enriched the lives of many people as he worked and contributed to his community.

I am led to believe that Dave’s initial motivation for seeking election was his opposition to the privatisation of the local timber industry and the selling of the Pemberton timber mill. This state sawmill was established in 1913 to supply 500 000 sleepers for the Trans–Australian Railway; by 1939 it was the largest milling complex in Australia. This sparked a long-term interest in forestry and the timber industry, and I am sure he revelled in the opportunity to be Minister for Forests. In recognition of his long-term support for balanced forest management, it was proposed that a forest be named after Dave Evans. It transpired, however, that forests can only be named after deceased people—and, at that time, Dave had no plans to comply with this requirement! So instead of a forest, Dave had a tree named after him—the Dave Evans Bicentennial Tree, which was mentioned earlier today. This is a 75-metre tall karri tree—the tallest tree in the region—with a lookout that can be reached by climbing, I am told, 165 pegs; not just 130, Premier, but we will see who is right on that one!

He had an interest and passion for regional WA, especially the south west region. He saw population decline in the south west due to the mechanisation of the timber industry and of farming, and he believed that more work needed to be undertaken on decentralisation. In his inaugural speech, on 6 August 1968, he said —

If decentralisation is to become a meaningful word and if we are to have any policy of decentralisation at all, then the problems of the south-west must be analysed in detail and faced squarely.

Dave was progressive in his thinking and wanted to ensure that projects were in place to capitalise on future developments. Dave understood the need to capitalise on tourism as a growth industry, particularly given that at the time of his election there were very poor returns for farmers in the wool, lamb, apple and dairy industries. He pressed for the sealing of Eyre Highway and for agricultural inspection of vehicles travelling across the Nullarbor as a method of controlling disease, with the idea of linking this to an Aboriginal cultural centre that would provide a point of interest and education for people entering Western Australia. This highlights his forward thinking and visionary approach to projects, as well as his acknowledgement of the Indigenous people of our state and the importance of understanding Aboriginal history and culture.

Dave understood the tourism potential of the region, highlighting the beaches, the caves of the Augusta–Margaret River region, the forests of the south west and the wildflowers throughout the bush and roadside reserves. In his inaugural speech he stated —

I can envisage quite a future for tourism that should not be neglected.

The tourism potential of the region, particularly the Margaret River region, has certainly been realised, with tourism gaining momentum across the whole south west region. Alongside tourism, Dave had a keen interest in agriculture. He pushed for more research into agriculture, with a focus on the expansion of the horticulture industry. Dave called for an inquiry into the cost structure and price returns in both the whole milk and butterfat sections of the industry—an inquiry that would have equal merit today.

In recognition of his contributions and achievements, Dave Evans was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 1993; an honorary freeman of the Shire of Manjimup on 23 January, 2014; and received an Italian–Australian Friendship Award.

Dave was also a prolific author, leaving many short publications on the history of Pemberton and other topics regarding the Warren area. Two of his published books, which have been mentioned already today, are *Lookouts of the Karri Country* and *Southern Sketches: A Tale of the Development of the Warren and Nearby Districts*, both from 1993. Through his writing, he has left a lasting legacy for the people of the region to enjoy.

Vale, Dave Evans. Perhaps now is the right time to again discuss a forest being named after him. On a personal note, when I was elected to the seat of Warren–Blackwood, and, prior to that, the seat of Stirling, my electorate overlapped the area that Dave Evans represented in his seat. I still regularly hear comments about him and his contributions to the community, which is a massive testament to the high regard in which he was held by those communities. I pay my respects to his family, who are here today, and the sad loss that they have endured. Thank you.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [2.24 pm]: It is my great pleasure to contribute to this condolence motion this afternoon. Condolence motions are very important because they are an acknowledgement of members who have served in this place and a chance to acknowledge the contributions

they have made to their local communities, individuals, organisations and the broader Western Australian community and state.

I begin by expressing my condolences to family members who are here this afternoon: Michael, Megan and Claire, the children of David and Betty. I also extend my condolences to the extended family, their children, partners and grandchildren, and to friends and former members who are here to acknowledge the passing of a very, very decent Western Australian. David was born in Wales but made Western Australia his home, and I am proud to have known David. He and Betty resided in the City of Mandurah in their retirement years, and they were a formidable team. David's political success cannot be separated from the commitment of his dearly loved wife, Betty. They were a wonderful team.

It is important for us to remember, when speaking to a condolence motion, that we are talking about people who had a family. Anyone in public life knows all too well the tremendous sacrifices families make when a mother, father or loved one serves in this place or the other place, so my initial comments to the family are: thank you for allowing the state of Western Australia to share in the talents of your father. His contribution to this Parliament was not insignificant, as has already been highlighted by the Premier and other members this afternoon.

I want to talk about David as a person. It has been reflected in a number of speeches, and in acknowledgements at his funeral and in more public places, that David Evans made a remarkable contribution and was committed to the community he represented. Indeed, his legacy remains, and I think it is a matter of great pride for his family, friends and colleagues that when his name is mentioned in that part of the south west, it still evokes a warm reception. To leave a legacy of that nature is something that we in this Parliament should aspire to. It is remarkable that people in the communities of Warren–Blackwood and the lower south west still speak of the commitment and dedication of David Evans, and this is the time to acknowledge that.

David and Betty moved to Mandurah in 1988, at the same time as I moved to Mandurah. I remember meeting them during my first, ill-fated attempt to enter this place, as a young 26-year-old in the election of 1993. They were among the first people I met as a member of the Mandurah branch of the Australian Labor Party. Betty had a remarkably dry, some might say almost caustic, sense of humour in many respects; she had a wonderful sense of humour. David was a little more reserved, in some ways, but they were very pleased to support my efforts in that 1993 election. Of course, I was spectacularly unsuccessful, but in 2001 when we won the seat of Mandurah, those two people were there, and I am very, very proud of that. David and Betty were not only handing out how-to-vote cards, but also strongly supporting the efforts of winning the seat of Mandurah.

We need to remember that David was a returned serviceman—he served our nation. As we know, many of that generation are no longer with us, but what a tremendous legacy that is as part of his commitment to our nation and broader community. He was an educator. The member for Warren–Blackwood highlighted the deepest respect with which he was held when he was an educator in that part of the south west. Of course, he was a member of the Legislative Assembly and a minister of the Crown in government. He was much loved and respected. The respect for him crossed all political boundaries and has also been enduring. Again, that is a remarkable thing for a person to achieve.

I want to paint a quick picture. David and Betty lived at 8 Muir Place in Halls Head, which is very high up on the hill, so if climate change is real, the hill will still be there in 100 years. I can remember very vividly sitting on the front veranda of the white house with the arches looking down to the Mandurah central business district. David and Betty would talk about a whole range of things—politics, people, their love for the state and their genuine love of life. As was mentioned earlier, David continued his contribution to the community in many ways, including lifelong learning through the University of the Third Age in Mandurah. He was just a decent man. To the family, I thank you again on behalf of the Western Australian community for sharing your father with us and the broader community. It is a remarkable thing to do. We remember him with great fondness and great respect as a wonderful Western Australian.

MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland — Minister for Police) [2.31 pm]: I rise to pay tribute to the life and political career of Dave Evans. I was fortunate to meet Dave in about 1987. At that time, there were really two iconic country members of the Western Australian Labor Party, one being the member for Warren, Dave Evans, and the other being the member for Collie, Tom Jones. Both were fantastic characters who were absolutely committed to the towns and areas in which they lived, and both were loved by their communities.

We have heard of the political history and career of Dave Evans. I can certainly recall the discussions that occurred about when Dave would retire and who would replace him. In times gone by, I had a chat to Paul Omodei about this because I had heard his name mentioned. I understand that Dave was a mentor for Paul Omodei and there was an expectation that he would be able to encourage Paul to stand for the Australian Labor Party to replace him. I think he nearly succeeded in that challenge. However, in 1986, as I understand it, the then Premier, as Premiers do, felt that without Dave standing for the Australian Labor Party in 1986, we would lose the seat. On that basis,

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Mr Mark McGowan; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Terry Redman; Mr David Templeman; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Donald Punch

Dave was encouraged to stand again. He did that in the interests of the Australian Labor Party and in having a Labor government in Western Australia. He made that additional commitment to stand for us in 1986. As was highlighted by the percentage that was read out by the Leader of the Opposition during her contribution, although he won the seat with about 51.5 per cent of the vote, without him that seat would not have been held by Labor at that election. That is without doubt.

I have spoken to people when I have visited those regions, especially in years gone by, and he was a very much loved character. He and his wife were very much a package deal in that town. He not only knew everyone in town, but also had been to every school and community event, christening, wedding and twenty-first birthday party. He knew every family in the district. The kind of commitment that he gave to supporting his electorate is what re-elected him in 1986. He clearly had an outstanding career. He made a phenomenal contribution to the community of Western Australia, particularly to the area of forestry in the south west.

I pay tribute to Dave and extend my condolences to all his family and friends. He was certainly a very much loved and genuine character who I know will be missed.

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury) [2.35 pm]: I will make a very brief contribution to the condolence motion for Hywel David Evans. As a very young man aged 14, I moved to Manjimup, and Dave Evans was the local member. I moved from the big city of Manchester, and Manjimup taught me what community was all about because the community embraced me. Although I did not know David personally, his name was on everybody's lips and he embodied what a regional community is all about. When I decided to stand for office, the late Hon Mal Bryce said to me, "Never forget the community that you represent." He told me to always be what he called a parish politician, and to, "Look after your patch." To my mind, that is what Hon Hywel David Evans did in Manjimup. I later moved to Collie, which toughened me up a little I might add, and I met another politician of the same nature, Tom Jones. I am not sure whether it was because of their Welsh history—I was born in Wales—but those men epitomised for me the importance of representing their communities in this place. I pass on my condolences and thanks to Dave's family, because I have never forgotten him.

The SPEAKER: Members, we welcome David Evans' family and friends here today. I now 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.