

MAY HOLMAN BUILDING

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [2.09 pm]: I rise to inform the house that the McGowan government will rename 189 Royal Street, East Perth, the May Holman Building. This fulfils our election commitment that a WA Labor government would name a significant Western Australian building after its first woman Labor member of Parliament, May Holman. Elected in 1925, she became the first woman in Australia to represent the Labor Party in a Parliament. She was also the first woman in Australia to serve 10 years in Parliament. May was a woman of many talents. She was a professional singer, pianist and performer who seriously considered a career on the stage before she decided to enter politics. She was a trailblazing politician, who is widely credited with introducing some of the first pieces of worker health and safety legislation anywhere in the world.

During her time in Parliament, she was a strong advocate for her electorate of Forrest in the state's south west, and for the protection of women and children. Tragically, she was killed in a car accident the day after she won her fifth term as the member for Forrest. She stayed alive until the following Monday, when she was told that she had been re-elected—two hours before she passed away. Among Ms Holman's many admirers was former Prime Minister John Curtin, who was a pallbearer at her funeral and who once said of his WA party colleague, "I can only say her life was magnificent." One can only imagine what further legacies May would have gone on to leave our state.

The building previously named the May Holman Centre at 32 St Georges Terrace, Perth was renamed Golden Square in 2015. The co-location of the Department of Communities and the Department of Health at 189 Royal Street, East Perth, presented an opportunity to ensure the public recognition of May Holman's contribution to Western Australian society is preserved. Elected at just 31 years of age—a significant achievement even now, almost a century later—I am proud that Ms Holman's significant contributions to WA will not be forgotten.