Mr R.H. COOK (Kwinana — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [12.50 am]: I rise to pay my respects to Margaret Feilman, the pioneer of town planning in Western Australia and founding member of the Western Australian branch of the National Trust of Australia. Margaret Feilman was the first woman to become a cadet in the then Public Works Department of Western Australia and she completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Western Australia in 1943. After becoming recognised as an architect, she completed a postgraduate diploma in town planning at Durham University and then returned to Perth and opened a practice in architecture and town planning. In 1952 she was engaged by the then Public Works Department to plan the town site of Kwinana, which would house employees at the emerging industrial precinct, and later the Ellenbrook town site in the electorate of West Swan.

Margaret Feilman’s impact on the City of Kwinana cannot be underestimated. She designed with a major focus on the need to set aside large areas of bushland to be kept within the town site to offset the town’s close proximity to the Kwinana industrial strip. Many people, like me, are attracted to live in Kwinana because of this important environmental legacy from Ms Feilman. When I last spoke with Margaret Feilman, she grabbed me tightly by the arm and stressed that the natural environment must be preserved despite the impact of residential development and urban infill, demanding, in her words, “We’ve got to stop them!”

The contribution of Margaret Feilman as a town planner is very important, but we must also remember the remarkable contribution of a young woman who exhibited extraordinary leadership at a time when it was difficult for women rise in the public service, let alone undertake a major works project of this kind. We often speak in this place about people who have left their mark in our history.