

NATHAN VERITY

Statement by Member for Cannington

MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington) [12.52 pm]: I rise today to note the tragic death of Nathan Verity in the recent Jakarta hotel bombings. I first met Nathan in the mid-1990s when I worked as an industrial officer with the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Association. Nathan was hired by the union as a young organiser, having worked as a casual at Coles in Fremantle while studying. The SDA believes strongly in “like recruiting like” and Nathan was a university student at the time, like so many people working in the industry. As an industrial officer, I was part of the team of people who mentored new officials; indeed, so was my wife, Kate Doust, who was the SDA’s training officer at the time. Over the next few years that Nathan worked at the SDA, I got to know Nathan as a thoughtful person who was prepared to work, helping people to deal with the issues that came up in their workplaces. He was a person I found easy to be with, a friend to all of us at the SDA. This was a great time at the SDA. We were fighting to protect workers against the draconian workplace agreements that left young people exposed to exploitation, and Nathan was part of that fight. Later, when I became assistant state secretary of the Australian Labor Party, I kept in touch with Nathan. He would drop into my office for a coffee and a chat or a quick lunch. Later, I was pleased that Nathan would occasionally keep in touch with me after he had left Australia and update me with the changes to his life, his developing career and his family. It came as a great shock to me and my wife, Kate, when we returned from the school holidays with our kids to see Nathan Verity’s photo on the front page of the Sunday paper. On behalf of Kate and, indeed, everyone from the SDA who worked with Nathan, I extend my deepest sympathy to Vanessa and family on the tragic and untimely death of Nathan Verity.