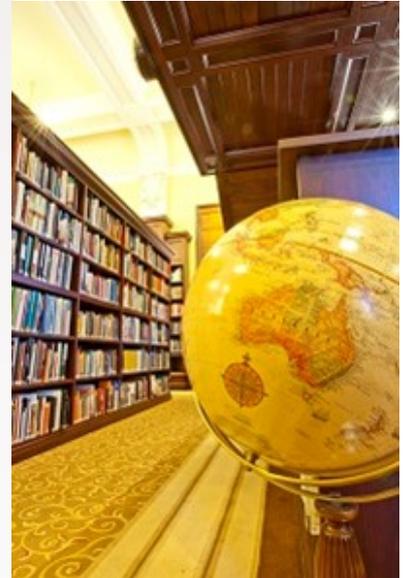


History Notes: Women's Firsts Portraits—Kate Doust
September 2022



Women's Firsts Portraits: Kate Doust



Hon Kate Doust

Photograph: Parliament of Western Australia

Kate Doust

Kate Doust was the first woman elected as President of the Legislative Council in Western Australia, which she held for one term from 2017 to 2021. When she was elected as President on 23 May 2017, she made a statement in the Legislative Council chamber acknowledging the significance of being elected as the first woman President of the WA Parliament:

‘This is our fortieth Parliament, so it has taken us a while to get there, but I think it certainly opens up the doors to demonstrate that women have the opportunity to participate in this place at all levels.’

As a working mother, she also spoke of how to make Parliament a more family friendly workplace.

In 2001, when Doust was first elected to the South Metropolitan Region, she saw it as a ‘great privilege’, especially as she had been unsuccessful at the 1996 state election. In her inaugural speech, she said she was looking forward:

‘to participating in the Gallop Government’s program of repair and reform to restore to the people of this state a decent standard of living in the areas of health, education and policing’.

After Labor’s election loss in 2008, Doust rose to Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council while also serving as the Shadow Minister for Energy, Science and Innovation. She has also been responsible for other shadow ministries including Industrial Relations; Commerce; Small Business; Trade and Electoral Affairs. Doust has been an ardent debater in the Council taking a pro-life stance on Bills related to euthanasia, cloning and stem cell research. She has also spoken of balancing work and family:

‘like other Western Australian workers, I have had to deal with this issue on a personal level as a parent of three young children juggling the pressures of a full-time job, community activity, political involvement with the Labor Party and sustaining a relationship with my husband’.

Doust still holds South Metropolitan Region making her one of the longest serving parliamentarians in the WA Parliament. On 6 September 2022, she was the first person awarded the Commonwealth Parliamentarian of the Year Award, in recognition of her long parliamentary service, as well as her work to promote women and people with disabilities in her community.

Catherine Doust was born on 27 May 1962 in Kalgoorlie, WA to Barry Doust, a postal worker, and Esther Grogan, a medical secretary. She was educated at St Matthew’s School, Narrogin; St Michael’s, Kalgoorlie; St Michael’s, Bassendean; and Mercedes, Our Lady of the Missions High School, Fremantle. In 1990, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Western Australia majoring in politics and industrial relations. Prior to parliament, she worked as a shop assistant, cleaner, library clerk, insurance clerk and trade union official for the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association of WA. On 14 January 1995, Doust married William (Bill) Joseph Johnston, the MLA for Cannington and they have one son and two daughters.

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