



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
PARLIAMENTARY
HISTORY
PROJECT

Women in the WA Parliament: an annotated bibliography

Dr Niamh Corbett for the
Parliamentary History
Advisory Committee,
Parliament of
Western Australia

December 2024



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Presiding Officers' foreword

This annotated bibliography, commissioned by the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee is a tribute to all the women who have served the Western Australian Parliament. Women have faced significant challenges in even contemplating standing for Parliament let alone sustaining a lengthier term of office.

Western Australia can take pride in the fact that Edith Cowan, the first woman to be elected to any parliament in Australia was elected to the Western Australian Legislative Assembly on 12 March 1921. Of equal significance, the second woman to be elected to any Australian parliament, May Holman was also elected to our Assembly on 3 April 1925, and was re-elected an impressive five more times before her tragic death in 1939.

Despite taking a stellar lead on women's representation, what followed in our state like most other jurisdictions was abysmally slow. In the next 62 years just seven more women were elected to either house, while a further 317 men took office across the two houses. With the exception of Hon Lyla Eliot and Hon Margaret McAleer, all had left office by 1983. The year 1983 was in many senses a turning point with an additional five women being elected across both Houses. For seven women to be elected at a single election was groundbreaking. Just seven years later Western Australia took another first when the Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence became the first woman Premier in Australia in 1990.

It took a full 100 years for the 100th woman, Caitlin Collins to be elected on 14 March 2021. At that election, 21 newly elected women took up their seats alongside 15 newly elected men across both Houses, making the total number of women elected in 2021, 43 out of a total of 95 positions. A further three women were elected after the 2021 election, increasing the overall total of women members of the WA Parliament to 117. The election of one of those members, Magenta Marshall, marked an historic occasion for the Assembly as 30 of the 59 elected members of the Legislative Assembly are now women, the first time the House has had a majority of female members.

Women now occupy positions of higher office right across the Parliament, including both of the Presiding Officers and the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, who has held this role for nine years. This collection aims to provide an insight into some of those challenges and highlight progress, albeit often slow. We hope that the inspirational accounts contained within provide a valuable insight for students, researchers, historians and that they provoke thought and conversation for everyone.



**Hon Alanna
Clohesy MLC**
President of the
Legislative Council
Western Australia



**Hon Michelle
Roberts MLA**
Speaker of the
Legislative Assembly
Western Australia

About the author

Dr Niamh Corbett JP is a parliamentary officer at the Parliament of Western Australia and has considerable research expertise having worked in various roles in the Legislative Council, the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Library. In 2023, Dr Corbett co-authored a book with Dr Harry Phillips AM: 'Parliamentary committees in the Western Australian Parliament: An overview of their evolution, functions and features. Volume 2: 2001–2021'. She was appointed as a Justice of the Peace by the Governor of Western Australia in 2009.



Right: President Clohesy and Speaker Roberts at the launch of the 'Women's wall' in the Edith Cowan foyer, 2022. *Photo: Parliament House collection.*

Introduction

The Parliamentary History Advisory Committee (PHAC) was established in 1984 and the Committee's initial objective was the development of publications for the 1990 centenary of the proclamation of Western Australia as a self-governing colony and of the establishment of its bicameral legislature. Today the PHAC oversees the collection and development of Western Australia's parliamentary history program.

The committee is chaired on a rotational basis by the presiding officers of the Parliament of Western Australia with staff representation from the three parliamentary departments: the Department of the Legislative Council, the Department of the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Services Department. It is hoped that this guide will act as a reference point in identifying and locating materials about the women elected to serve in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in a single and accessible source.

Central to the approach taken in selecting resources has been a desire to be inclusive and to present a diverse range of approaches and viewpoints. While not all references can be classified as 'scholarly' they have been included because they contribute to the overall history of the WA Parliament. Arranged alphabetically by author, entries take the form of books, chapters in books, journal articles, online resources, factsheets, memoirs, biographies, theses, essays, transcripts and audio/visual recordings.

This annotated bibliography does not claim to be exhaustive nor definitive; rather it should be viewed as a starting point in documenting the experiences of women in the Parliament of Western Australia. Seen collectively it represents the wisdom, knowledge and experiences of these individual women and adds visibility to their contributions. The Committee hopes that this publication will encourage further exploration of the work of the women elected to the Parliament. We hope this will be a dynamic resource; the inclusion of further references is welcome. Please contact us if you would like to contribute.



Acronyms and abbreviations

ALP	Australian Labor Party
IND	Independent
GWA	The Greens (WA)
LA	Legislative Assembly
LC	Legislative Council
Libs	Liberal Party
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MLC	Member of the Legislative Council
Nat	National Party
Natl	Nationalist
PoWA	Parliament of Western Australia

Women in the WA Parliament: an annotated bibliography

Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2022).
***May Holman: Australia's first female Labor
parliamentarian. Radio segment, recorded live
on ABC 720 Radio Perth, 18 March 2022.***

Join Dr Kate Gregory as she explores the extraordinary life of **May Holman**, Australia's first female Labor parliamentarian, a member of the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia from 1925 to 1939. Holman led a trailblazing life which charted new territory for women, including introducing one of the first pieces of worker health and safety legislation anywhere, the *Timber Industry Act* in 1926. This act improved the living and working conditions of employees and their families. As Dr Gregory explains, Holman was deeply committed to improving society and campaigned on education reform, health reform, occupational health and safety reform plus equal pay for women and men. The State Library of Western Australia holds a rich collection of material relating to May Holman, especially her private archive, a treasure trove for those interested in learning more about this remarkable woman.



Listen:

Sound recording:
15.52 mins

https://soundcloud.com/statelibrarywa/may-holam-the-first-woman-in-the-labour-party?utm_source=clipboard&utm_campaign=wtshare&utm_medium=widget&utm_content=https%253A%252F%252Fsoundcloud.com%252Fstatelibrarywa%252Fmay-holam-the-first-woman-in-the-labour-party



Transcript:

Online viewing

<https://slwa.wa.gov.au/stories/slwa-abc-radio/may-holman>

Studio portrait of May Holman by the Broothorn Studios, signed 'Your old pupil'. Photo: State Library of Western Australia. 006758D.



**Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2021).
*Edith Cowan (1861–1932). Afternoons with Christine
Layton. History Repeated* radio segment, recorded
live on ABC 720 Radio Perth, 5 March 2021.**

Listen:

Sound recording
14.32 mins

https://soundcloud.com/statelibrarywa/edith-cowan-womens-history-month?utm_source=clipboard&utm_campaign=wtshare&utm_medium=widget&utm_content=https%253A%252F%252Fsoundcloud.com%252Fstatelibrarywa%252Fedith-cowan-womens-history-month

John Hughes, Senior Subject Specialist at the State Library, discusses one of WA's most famous and influential women, **Edith Cowan** on ABC Radio Perth. Throughout her life Cowan championed social change, especially issues relating to women and children. She helped found the exclusively female Karrakatta Club that was active in the campaign for female suffrage. She was fundamental in the formation of Women's Service Guilds and was instrumental in the establishment of King Edward Hospital for Women. She was one of the first women elected to the Anglican Synod, was the chairperson of the Red Cross Appeal Committee, and was awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) all before being elected to the WA Parliament in 1921.

The member for Dawesville, Lisa Munday speaking in Legislative Assembly, under the watchful gaze of Edith Cowan. Photo: Parliament House collection.



**Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2021).
*Ms Represented with Annabel Crabb. ABC TV series.***

In 2021, to commemorate the centenary of the election of the first female parliamentarian in Australia the ABC produced this four-part docuseries for ABC TV. Presented by political journalist Annabel Crabb, 'Ms Represented' is a revealing account of politics from the female perspective. It looks at the trajectory of women in politics since the first suffragettes started campaigning for women's rights in Australia. Crabb interviews a number of sitting and former members, and they reflect on the historical milestone by **Edith Cowan**. The complexities of being a female parliamentarian and how the everyday experience and public perception of women in politics differs from that of males is also discussed. The series also tracks the arrival of a new wave of women into Australian parliaments in the 1970s and 80s and examines the impact women have had in politics and on society more broadly.



Watch:

Four episodes,
~30 mins each
<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/ms-represented-with-annabel-crabb>



**Australian Broadcasting Corporation (2021).
*Ms Represented with Annabel Crabb and
Steph Tisdell.* ABC Listen podcast.**

Listen:

Six episodes,
~30 mins each

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/ms-represented/episodes>

In this accompanying podcast to the television series of the same name, journalist Annabel Crabb and comedian Steph Tisdell chart the rise of female parliamentarians in Australian politics. They delve into how women shaped politics since the election of **Edith Cowan** in 1921, the challenges they faced and the 'unbelievable' things they had to do along the way to get their views heard. Episode 1, 'Not designed for women' features Edith Cowan and the structural barriers she faced given that Parliament House was designed without women in mind. Another episode questions if parliament is a safe workplace for all; discusses the obsession with how female politicians present themselves and how much time is spent on hair and makeup; asks why the child-bearing capacity of female parliamentarians is a focus area; and also looks at how alcohol has shaped parliamentary culture and often excluded women.

Lara Dalton was the first female elected as the member for Geraldton in 2021, in the centenary year of Edith Cowan's election to the Legislative Assembly. *Photo: Supplied, Lara Dalton.*



Australian Competition and Consumer Commission/ CHOICE (2023). *One talk: Sharing yarns*, presented by Lynda Edwards. Ruby Hutchison Memorial Lecture, jointly hosted by Alan Kirkland, CEO of CHOICE, and ACCC Deputy Chair Catriona Lowe, Tuesday, 15 March 2023, State Library of New South Wales.

Held annually to coincide with World Consumer Rights Day in honour of the contribution made by **Ruby Hutchison** to consumer affairs, the *Ruby Hutchison Memorial Lecture* is the flagship consumer presentation by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. The 2023 lecture was presented in person and online by Lynda Edwards, recipient of both the 2023 NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year and NSW Premier's Woman of the Year awards. Edwards is known as an advocate for the financial rights, fairness and inclusion of First Nations people. Her passionate lecture provided details about her life, her family and her work. Much of this aligns with the values espoused by Ruby Hutchison and her advocacy work in establishing the consumer protection movement. Transcripts of previous lectures are available from the ACCC website and contain references to Hutchison (Ross Gittins, 2011; Susan Ryan AO, 2012; Carolyn Bond AO, 2013; Professor Megan Davis, 2014; Richard Cordray, 2015; Gordon Renouf, 2016; Jessica Irvine, 2017; Fiona Guthrie AM, 2018; Edward Santow, 2019. Online videos: Julian Morrow, 2021; and Rod Sims, 2022).



Watch:

Video recording,
55.19 mins

<https://youtu.be/N-awLxGNV18>



Hon Ruby Hutchison was the first woman elected to the Legislative Council in 1954. Photo: Westpix/ West Australian Newspapers Limited WAN-0042529



Watch:

Hosted online,
video recording,
31.57 mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUTDpVUtiO8>

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission /CHOICE (2021). *Ruby Hutchison: Founder of the Australian consumer movement*. National Consumer Congress 2021: Virtual Lecture Series. Ruby Hutchison Memorial Lecture, presented by Julian Morrow, Monday, 15 March 2021.

The National Consumer Congress 2021: Virtual Lecture Series was held entirely online due to the coronavirus pandemic. The theme of the congress was 'How can we rebuild a safer, fairer and more sustainable Australia post pandemic?'. The lecture was delivered by Julian Morrow (Co-founder of satirical media empire The Chaser among other TV productions) in his comic style. His presentation included an informative six-minute video biography of **Ruby Hutchison**, the founder of the Australian Consumers' Association (now CHOICE). The video provides a useful summary of Hutchison's life, her parliamentary career and her achievements. Drawing on archival materials, the video contains excerpts of interviews with Hutchison herself. It also includes contributions from consumer affairs stakeholders on the impact of her initiatives. Hutchison's granddaughter and great-granddaughters also provide insights into her legacy. Also includes a contribution from **Hon Kate Doust** who at that time was President of the Legislative Council.

Arnold, S., & Kovac, T. (2014). HERstory—the EMILY’s List Australia success story. *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, 29(2), 22–41.

A brief history of EMILY’s List Australia detailing its financial, political and personal network for supporting progressive women candidates into parliament. **Carol Martin**, Australia’s first indigenous woman MP, benefited from this support in her successful bid for the seat of Kimberley in the 2001 election. The article explains that Martin challenged the organisation to address the systemic disadvantage of Aboriginal women and in response, a working group was set up to explore strategies for getting indigenous women elected. The article also mentions the supporting role of **Dr Carmen Lawrence** and the leadership role of **Cheryl Davenport** in the establishment of the network.



Read:

Journal article, 19p

<https://www.aspg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/HERstory-1.pdf>



Carol Martin being awarded her Order of Australia medal at Government House by Governor Dawson, 2023. Photo: Government House.



Listen:

Sound recording,
1.46.27 mins

<https://echo360.org.au/media/bb23fe70-54db-49f8-8127-76fda283addb/public>

Australian Association of Social Workers (2019). *Women, inequality and the butterfly effect*. The 2019 Grace Vaughan Memorial Lecture, presented by Antoinette Kennedy AO, Thursday 22 August 2019, the Institute of Advanced Studies, University of Western Australia.

This annual lecture commemorates the life and achievements of **Grace Vaughan**, a social worker, social activist and parliamentarian, who was dedicated to the improvement of life at all levels. She had a deep commitment to Australia's participation in the Asian region and to ensuring women's full participation in society. The lecture series is a collaboration between the Australian Association of Social Workers, the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia and Department of Communities Western Australia. In 2019, the Honourable Antoinette Kennedy AO was invited to present the memorial lecture. She is the first and longest serving female judge in Western Australia, serving for 25 years, and despite her retirement, remains the longest serving judge in the state.

An active participant in the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, Kennedy remained committed to feminist ideals throughout the changing political landscape of the 1970 and 1980s, which saw the introduction of no-fault divorce, changing attitudes to domestic violence, and property rights for women leaving relationships. This period coincided with Grace Vaughan's election to the Legislative Council in 1974 where she served a single six-year term. Kennedy speaks about the history of women in the law, her own personal experiences, and what that has taught her about the many issues faced by women. She explores the possibilities of what can be achieved when women support each other, have their consciousness raised, possess the freedom to look at issues outside of the male gaze and each woman has a power base consisting of every other woman. Also discusses the #metoo movement in what she describes as the most recent iteration of the women's equality movement.

Baird, J. (2021). *Media tarts*. (Rev. ed.). ABC Books.

Originally published in 2004, and based on research for a doctoral thesis, political journalist Julia Baird provides powerful insights into how the media treats females in the Australian political system. In this revised and updated edition, she again draws on a series of extensive interviews, including thoughtful and unique contributions by **June Craig, Lyla Elliott, Kay Hallahan, Yvonne Henderson, Beryl Jones, Dr Carmen Lawrence** and **Dr Judyth Watson**.



Read:

Book, 416p



(Left to right) Labor members Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, Rita Saffioti MLA, Simone McGurk MLA, Hon Sue Ellery MLC, Hon Alanna Clohesy MLC and Lisa Baker MLA on the front steps of Parliament House. *Photo: Supplied, Simone McGurk.*

Baker, L. (2013). Enlivening women's engagement with Parliament (Women's engagement and participation in politics). *The Parliamentarian*, XCIV(3), 174–5.

In this article **Lisa Baker**, Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) for the Australian region, describes the key initiatives that CWP Australia are pursuing under her stewardship. Drawing on her experience as a female parliamentarian she explains that advocating for gender equality in politics continues to be an important focus.



Read:

Journal article, 1p



Read:

Journal article, 11p

<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6825>

Baldry, E. (1996). Women's leadership in the consumer movement. *International Review of Women and Leadership. Special issue: Women and politics*, 2(1), 74–85.

Elizabeth Baldry points to practical and values-oriented leadership by women such as **Ruby Hutchison** in raising consciousness of the need for the consumer movement in Australia. This article details Hutchison's long and distinguished record in demanding consumers' rights and references the significant contribution she made to consumer protection. Hutchison is credited with establishing the Australian Consumers Association (now CHOICE) based on her personal struggles—both as a mother and as a businesswoman—and her connections within the labour movement.



Read:

Illustrated book,
272p

Ball, R., & Lupin, E. (2023). *Women who won: 70 extraordinary women who reshaped politics*. Unbound Publishing.

Beautifully illustrated by artist Emmy Lupin, this book by BBC broadcast journalist Ros Ball, who worked for many years in Westminster politics, celebrates the election of well-known females in the international political arena. It also introduces lesser known figures to an international audience. Each individual has a one-to-two-page entry and is accompanied by a colourful illustration. One of these extraordinary women is Western Australia's **Carol Martin**, who is featured for being the first Aboriginal woman elected to an Australian Parliament.

Bettles, C. (2009). Duncan leaves Nationals presidency. *Farm Weekly*, 100(4409), 28.

This brief article quotes **Wendy Duncan** following her decision to step aside from her position of President of the National Party. She made history in 2004 when she was elected to the presidency of the party—the first woman to do so. At the time of her announcement, she was the party's first member for the Mining and Pastoral Region and had been appointed as Parliamentary Secretary to Regional Development Minister. She cited increased workload from her other political roles as reasons for her decision to stand down from her history-making role.



Read:

Journal article, 1p

Black, D. (2006). *An index to parliamentary candidates in Western Australian elections: State and Federal 1890–2006*. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. Parliament of Western Australia.

A major revision of an earlier book published in 1989, this second volume covers the period 1890 to 2006. This update includes an entry for each occasion in which the persons listed contested a state parliamentary seat, the years in which this occurred, details of party affiliation, the districts contested and the electoral success or otherwise of the candidate. Appendices include a useful listing of non-Labor party name changes; dates of general and periodic elections, Legislative Council casual vacancies; Senate elections and terms of service; and Senate casual vacancies. Although, not listed separately, it provides a useful source for tracing female candidates in Western Australian parliamentary elections.



Read:

Book, 376p



Read:

Book, 91p

Black, D. (1996). *Women parliamentarians in Australia 1921–1996: A register of women members of Commonwealth, state and territory parliaments in Australia*. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. Parliament of Western Australia.

An initiative of the Parliamentary History Committee to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the election of **Edith Cowan** as Australia's first woman member of Parliament, this register compiled by David Black is a useful source of information about women in parliament. Organised into five parts, the first lists in chronological order those women elected to serve in Australian parliaments from 1921 to 1996. Part 2 lists in chronological order for each House the women elected to serve. Ministerial appointments are listed in Part 3. Part 4 comprises an alphabetical listing and register of women members of Australian parliaments. Details of the current (to 1996) and historical representation of women appears in Part 5.

Useful tables appear throughout the text. This includes the number of women first elected or nominated to Australian Commonwealth, state and territory parliaments in specified time periods; a list of women who have been members of more than one House; the number of women elected to Australian parliaments classified according to the party of first endorsement; the number of women elected to each House Australian Commonwealth, state and territory parliaments; Australian women premiers and chief ministers; number of Australian women members of Parliament to serve as ministers; the number of women members of Australian Parliaments (as at April 1996); the changing percentage representation of women in each Australian house of parliament (1970 to 1996); and a list of the youngest women elected to Australian parliaments (to 1996).

Black, D. (1996). *Legislative Council of Western Australia: Membership register, electoral law and statistics 1890–1989*. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. Parliament of Western Australia.

This authoritative guide to those elected to serve in the Legislative Council since the advent of responsible government was compiled by David Black as an initiative of the Western Australian Parliament's history project. While it doesn't list women's membership separately, it is still a useful guide to the electoral law and statistics of the upper house (to 1989). It also provides an overview of the electoral law, changes in membership over the years and election statistics.



Read:

Book, 390p

Black, D. (1993). *Cardell-Oliver, Dame Annie Florence (1876–1965)*. *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University. Melbourne University Press.

Authored by David Black, this entry for Florence (Annie) Cardell-Oliver was originally published in the hardcopy version of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Volume 13). Here Black provides a short, but detailed account of her life and ground-breaking parliamentary career. Contains a select bibliography for further reading.



Read:

Online resource

<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/cardellooliver-dame-annie-florence-9688>



Florence Cardell-Oliver pictured wearing one of the lavishly trimmed hats she favoured, Broothorn Studios. Photo: National Portrait Gallery of Australia. Gift of Chris Nielsen 2016.



Read:

Book, 558p

Black, D. (Ed.). (1991). *The House on the hill: A history of the Parliament of Western Australia, 1832–1990*. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. Parliament of Western Australia.

Produced to mark the centenary of the proclamation of Western Australia as a self-governing Colony on 21 October 1890 and the inauguration of a bicameral legislature and system of responsible cabinet government. Various mentions of women elected to the Parliament during this period are mentioned.



Read:

Book, 213p

Black, D., & Bolton, G. (Eds). (2011) *Biographical register of members of the Parliament of Western Australia, Volume 1: 1870–1930*. Parliament of Western Australia.

Co-authored by David Black and Geoffrey Bolton, this authoritative guide to the membership of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly provides detailed biographical entries for each person nominated or elected from 1870 to 1930. Includes entries for **Edith Cowan** and **May Holman**.

Minister Sue Ellery and Minister Simone McGurk at Executive Council with Governor Beazley, January 2021. Photo: Government House.



Black, D., & Bolton, G. (Eds). (2011). *Biographical register of members of the Parliament of Western Australia, Volume 2: 1930–2010*. (Revised and updated). Western Australian Parliamentary History Project, Parliament of Western Australia.

A companion guide to Black and Bolton's landmark biographical register, this volume covers biographical information about members elected to the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly for the period 1930 to 2010. First published in 1990, this book was revised and updated in 2004, again in 2011. Women elected during this period and included in this volume are: Legislative Assembly members: **Megan Anwyl, Lisa Baker, Pamela (Pam) Beggs, Pamela (Pam) Buchanan, Florence Cardell-Oliver, Adele Carles, Dr Liz Constable, June Craig, Dr Judy Edwards, Cheryl Edwardes, Janine Freeman, Dianne Guise, Kay Hallahan, Liza Harvey, Yvonne Henderson, Katie Hodson-Thomas, Monica Holmes, Judy Hughes, Dr Carmen Lawrence, Alannah MacTiernan, Sheila McHale, Carol Martin, Andrea Mitchell, Rhonda Parker, Margaret Quirk, Jaye Radisich, Michelle Roberts, Rita Saffioti, Dr Hilda Turnbull, June van de Klashorst, Sue Walker, Diana Warnock,**



Read:

Book, 290p



Dr Judy Edwards and June Craig (bottom of the stairs) photographed at the 'Top 5 Awards' in 2002. Photo: Ernie McLintock, Dept of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, July 2002.

Jacqueline (Jackie) Watkins, Dr Judyth Watson and Dr Janet Woollard; and Legislative Council members: **Diane Airey, Shelley Archer, Elizabeth (Liz) Behjat, Helen Bullock, Carolyn Burton, Cheryl Davenport, Mia Davies, Catherine (Kate) Doust, Wendy Duncan, Shelley Eaton, Suzanne (Sue) Ellery, Lyla Elliott, Donna Faragher, Adele Farina, Valma Ferguson, Kay Hallahan, Ruby Hutchison, Alyssa Hayden, Helen Hodgson, Beryl Jones, Margaret McAleer, Robyn McSweeney, Lynn MacLaren, Alannah MacTiernan, Diane (Dee) Margetts, Sheila Mills, Helen Morton, Muriel Patterson, Winifred (Win) Piesse, Louise Pratt, Ljiljana Ravlich, Margaret Rowe, Linda Savage, Barbara Scott, Dr Christine (Chrissy) Sharp, Dr Sally Talbot, Grace Vaughan, Giz Watson and Alison Xamon.**



Read:

Book, 610p

Black, D., & Phillips, H. C. J. (Eds). (2012). *Making a difference: A frontier of firsts: Women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921–2012*. Parliament of Western Australia.

This revised edition builds on the original 2000 version, and updates the contents based on changes to the composition of the respective Houses. The parliamentary records indicate that in the twelve years since an earlier volume was published, an additional thirty-five women were elected, including Legislative Assembly members **Lisa Baker, Adele Carles, Janine Freeman, Dianne Guise, Liza Harvey, Dr Judy Hughes, Sheila McHale, Carol Martin, Andrea Mitchell, Margaret Quirk, Jaye Radisich, Rita Saffioti, Dr Janet Woollard and Sue Walker.** Those elected to the Legislative Council include **Shelley Archer, Liz Behjat, Helen Bullock, Carolyn Burton, Mia Davies, Kate Doust, Shelley Eaton, Alyssa Hayden, Wendy Duncan, Sue Ellery, Donna Faragher, Adele Farina, Lynn MacLaren, Robyn McSweeney, Dee Margetts, Sheila Mills, Helen Morton, Louise Pratt, Margaret Rowe, Linda Savage, Dr Sally Talbot and Alison Xamon.** The book highlights the contributions of the women featured and shows how they made a difference.

Black, D., & Phillips, H. C. J. (Eds). (2000). *Making a difference: A frontier of firsts: Women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921–1999*. Parliamentary History Project, Parliament of Western Australia.

An initiative of the WA Parliament's history project, this seminal work provides a useful addition to the history of Western Australia highlighting the rich and varied contributions made by women elected to serve in the Legislative Assembly (from 1921) and the Legislative Council (from 1954). The opening chapter provides an informative overview, summarising the careers of each of the individual women. Other chapters detail Western Australia's quest for the vote for women (by Betty Carter) and women's voting behaviour (by Tamara Fischer). The next section provides a detailed biographical entry for each individual and where possible includes reflections by the members' themselves. These unique firsthand accounts add to the richness of this significant resource. Appendices contain useful lists such as, the women members of the WA Parliament listed chronologically and by house (1921–99); women ministers (1947–99); women candidates in Western Australian elections (1921–99); a list of milestones in the representation of women (12 March 1921–7 Feb 2000); and a select bibliography for further reading.



Read:

Book, 309p



New members Pam Beggs and Kay Hallahan pictured with Premier Burke and Ernie Bridge in the Forrest Foyer, Parliament House, 12 Feb 1986. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134585.



Read:

Journal article, 22p

Black, D., & Phillips, H. C. J. (1999). A bicameral case study: The 1998 Western Australian abortion legislation. *Legislative Studies*, 13(2), 7–29.

A detailed analysis by David Black and Dr Harry Phillips of an unprecedented episode in Western Australian parliamentary history worthy of further academic exploration: abortion law reform. This article discusses the passage of **Cheryl Davenport's** private members' bill and Peter Foss' government bill and explains how it dealt with two distinct but similar bills which had emerged from the two Houses. Notably, this was the first and only time since 1890 that both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly passed a separate bill on the same issue, in the same session and was the subject of a conscience vote. The article draws heavily on the parliamentary debates and contributions by **Cheryl Davenport, Rhonda Parker, Michelle Roberts, Dr Hilda Turnbull, June van de Klashorst** and **Diana Warnock**.



Collie MLA Dr Hilda Turnbull addresses the media during the launch of the opposition health policy, 10 Jan 1993. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134593.

Black, D. & Prescott, V. (1997). *Election statistics: Legislative Assembly of Western Australia 1890–1996*. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. Parliament of Western Australia.

This is another useful resource emanating from the collaboration by David Black and Valerie Prescott, and with the support of the Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. It contains the seat-by seat election results for each of the state electoral districts in the Legislative Assembly for the period 1890 to 1996. This includes entries for the following successful candidates in the Legislative Assembly, namely:

Megan Anwyl, Pamela (Pam) Beggs, Pamela (Pam) Buchanan, Florence Cardell-Oliver, Dr Liz Constable, Edith Cowan, June Craig, Dr Judy Edwards, Cheryl Edwardes, Kay Hallahan, Yvonne Henderson, Katie Hodson-Thomas, May Holman, Monica Holmes, Dr Carmen Lawrence, Sheila McHale, Alannah MacTiernan, Rhonda Parker, Michelle Roberts, Dr Hilda Turnbull, June van de Klashorst, Diana Warnock, Jacqueline (Jackie) Watkins and Dr Judyth Watson.



Read:

Book, 470p



Alyssa Hayden was a successful candidate in elections for both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0091234.



Read:

Conference paper,
4p

<https://www.foresthistory.org.au/Proceedings2004/132.pdf>

Bolton, G. (2005). May Holman, Katharine Prichard and the timberworkers. In Calver, M. et al. (Ed.). *Proceedings 6th National Conference of the Australian Forest History Society: History and heritage of Australia's forests Inc*, Mill Press, 374–7.

In this peer reviewed article, Geoffrey Bolton explores the links between **May Holman** and Katharine Susannah Prichard based on an observation by Jenny Mills. Mills conjectures that Holman and Prichard may have been friendly given the seeming coincidence that novelist Katharine Susannah Prichard published a book about the South-West timber industry, 'Working Bullocks', in 1926—the same year in which May Holman brought about the *Timber Regulation Act* which legislated to improve the living and working conditions of those employed at timber mills across Western Australia.

It also marked the first major step to improving occupational safety in the industry. Public attention was drawn to these issues through the novel which was probably the first social realist novel with a Western Australian setting, and the trade union official Holman, who went on to become the first woman Labor member of the WA Parliament. Bolton's paper attempts to explore the extent to which the contributions of these two women converged and led to significant change. Although they were not natural allies, as their backgrounds differed considerably between them, they did much to raise public consciousness about working conditions in the timber industry.

Brabazon, T. (2003). Whiteboard, docs and a boa: Edith Cowan and the making of political women. *Australian Quarterly*, 75, 28–40.

In this article Tara Brabazon posits that, despite the accomplishments of **Edith Cowan** in public life, including her historic election to the WA Parliament and her standing up to the 'men's club of Parliament', capitalising on that early success has proved 'disappointingly slow'. According to the author, in the 1924 election, Cowan was eliminated on the first preference vote count and 'did not release the floodgate of women candidates' (p. 30). As Brabazon observes, this is not 'a narrative of great success for feminism, women or Australian politics' (p. 31). That women are unfairly represented in the media is also a theme in the article. Refers to 'tabloid journalism' being used as a key tactic to erase women from the political landscape by unearthing material about sexual liaisons, dress sense or mental state.

Cites the 'intolerable affront' experienced by **Sue Walker** in the Legislative Assembly when she was accused of being a member of the 'mile high club'. Also mentions **Dr Carmen Lawrence's** experiences noting that the abuse of a female parliamentarian on the basis of sexuality is 'a disgrace'. Mention is also made of the ridicule that women in public life experience, especially for their physical appearance. Brabazon concludes that rather than focussing on the few outstanding successful women in political life, there is more to learn from those who have experienced setbacks, hardships or have simply failed. Citing **Edith Cowan** as an example the author points out that while her successes were remarkable, and are well documented, '[t]he tragedy is that historical documents do not record her anger, suffering or seething silence. We never see her fear impatience or stress' suggesting that as a consequence we don't see the whole picture.



Read:

Journal article, 8p



Read:

Book, 129p

Bradley, H., Paterson, H., Spalding, S., Kilian, T., & Fiorentino, R. (2013). *100 Collegian Voices. Methodist Ladies' College.*

Produced for the centenary of Methodist Ladies' College, this book features the achievements of former students **Wendy Duncan** and **Dr Hilda Turnbull**. Their entries highlight their successful parliamentary service and high achievements in public life, serving as an inspiration to that school community.



Read:

PhD Thesis, 340p

<https://research-repository.uwa.edu.au/en/publications/brnking-down-the-house-feminism-politics-and-womens-policy-in-wes>

Brankovich, J. (2007) *Burning Down the House?: Feminism, politics and women's policy in Western Australia, 1972–1998. University of Western Australia.*

This thesis traces an important West Australian political 'feminist graft', described as the state's 'official feminism', and its presence in parliamentary and bureaucratic political spheres from the 1970s until the 1990s. In a chapter titled 'Rock the boat not the cradle', the author traces feminist interactions with the state covering the period 1972 to 1983. It also examines what Brankovich refers to as feminism's 'new generations' and women's parliamentary representation in the 1980s. It outlines how the Labor state government introduced social policy reforms to benefit women and installed the 'women's policy machinery' in the public service. Campaigning and legislating for equal opportunity in 1984 were covered, so too the period 1984 to 1992 and 'doing it differently' in terms of leading the Women's Information and Referral Exchange. Abortion law reform in 1998 was also the subject of analysis. The thesis evaluated the constraints and opportunities that operated in relation to feminist demands on the state, the limits and gains of such interventions, and the subjective, intimate understandings of feminism among women agents who changed the state from within. This included interviews with **Cheryl Davenport, Kay Hallahan, Yvonne Henderson, Helen Hodgson, Beryl Jones, Dr Carmen Lawrence, Ljiljana Ravlich, Diana Warnock, Giz Watson** and **Dr Judyth Watson**.

**Brown, M. (1983). Holman, Mary Alice (1893–1939).
*In Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre
of Biography, Australian National University.***

Originally published 1983, this revised and updated online version covers the life and untimely death of Labor luminary **May Holman**. Written by Margaret Brown, this useful biography provides details of Holman's background, education, and early life. The extract also provides details about her family life, including her marriage to fellow Labor parliamentarian, Peter Joseph ('Joe') Gardiner. Brown explains that her parents were active in the Labor party and this influenced her.

Holman grew up in an atmosphere where men and women coexisted on the same intellectual plane and where loyalty to the Labor Party and family were feted. She assisted her father at the Timber Workers' Union with clerical work, book-keeping and arbitration. Well acquainted with timber families' lives and, after her father's death in 1925, she became acting secretary of the union and then won pre-selection for his blue-ribbon seat of Forrest, a predominantly timber electorate. Elected at a by-election, Holman became the first Labor woman parliamentarian in Australia, and retained the seat through four following elections. The article also details her parliamentary career, highlighting some of the causes and organisations for which she advocated.



Read:

Online resource

<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/holman-mary-alice-may-6711/text11585>



Read:

Essay, 18p

Available in the
Parliamentary Library.

Brown, R. K. (1984). *Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: A study of a parliamentarian.*

Written to satisfy the requirements of a university history unit in 1984, this student essay provides an interesting contribution in documenting the life of **Florence Cardell-Oliver**. Lamenting the lack of biographical work available on the pioneer women in the Parliament of Western Australia, this essay goes some way towards filling this gap. This fascinating history of Florence Cardell-Oliver provides a useful account of her early life, her journey to parliament and her successful parliamentary career. The essay notes that she was first elected to the Legislative Assembly in exciting circumstances—by a single vote, and on a recount. She then went on to serve the Subiaco electorate for the following twenty years.

At the time of Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver's election, women were conspicuous in the House and she was only the third Western Australian woman to be elected to the Legislative Assembly. According to Brown, the influence of the Women's Service Guilds played a key part in her path to parliament. Her visits overseas to Russia and Turkey are said to have 'fired her to seek election'. Some of this experience was recounted in a volume she self-published in 1934. Her immense contribution to Western Australian parliamentary politics is also canvassed in this essay. As the author attests, Cardell-Oliver's achievements, including being the first woman to attain cabinet rank in any Australian parliament and her 'courage and tenacity in pursuing unpopular causes' are worthy of further exploration. Contains a useful bibliography, and the appendices contain copies of newspaper articles and further finding aids.

Bulbeck, C. (1999). Historical note: Breaking the monumental mould: How the Edith Cowan clock was built. *International Review of Women and Leadership*, 2(1), 86–90.

A brief article tracing the history of the design and location of a clock tower to commemorate **Edith Cowan's** 'life of service'. The clocktower was intended to pay homage to Edith Cowan and her achievement in being the first female member elected to serve in any Australian parliament. From the outset the memorial was mired in controversy and as the article explains, the memorial was eventually erected outside the entrance to Kings Park. It seemingly challenged the hierarchical pluralism, and as Chilla Bulbeck suggests perhaps this 'monument' was a fitting way to remember Edith Cowan and her legacy after all.



Read:

Journal article, 4p

<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=7825&context=ecuworks>



Read:

Book, 266p

Buxton, J. (2015). *The Liberal Party of Western Australia: A short history of the Liberal Party of Western Australia in commemoration of seventy years.* [Liberal Party of Australia, Western Australia Division].

Published in 2015, to coincide with the seventieth anniversary of the Liberal Party in Western Australia, this book by Liberal Party historian Jeremy Buxton includes a detailed history of the organisation. Useful appendices contain details of those elected to serve in the Parliament of Western Australia. This includes the following women elected to the Legislative Assembly, namely: **Florence Cardell-Oliver, Margaret Craig, Cheryl Edwardes, Eleni Evangel, Glenys Godfrey, Liza Harvey, Katie Hodson-Thomas, Monica Holmes, Libby Mettam, Andrea Mitchell, Rhonda Parker, June van de Klashorst and Sue Walker**; and the Legislative Council: **Diane Airey, Liz Behjat, Donna Faragher, Alyssa Hayden, Elise Irwin, Margaret McAleer, Robyn McSweeney, Helen Morton, Muriel Patterson, Margaret Rowe and Barbara Scott.**



Former South West MLC Muriel Patterson was awarded an Order of Australia medal for service to the WA Parliament in 2023. *Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited ALA-0005337.*

Cardell-Oliver, F. (1934). *Empire unity or red Asiatic domination? The eastern menace: Russia, China, Japan and Bolshevism*. [Publisher not identified].

Written by **Florence Cardell-Oliver**, the tenor of the book was a defence of the Empire and the trade links between the Empire nations and a warning against communism. This became a theme in her parliamentary speeches. A keen traveller, and with an interest in foreign affairs, at the invitation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Cardell-Oliver attended the congress of the International Suffrage Alliance of Women in Istanbul that represented the women in the Australian Federation of Women Voters. It is said that on returning to Australia she was determined to enter Parliament.



Read:

Book, 152p



Read:

Book chapter, 6p

Carter, B. (2000). Votes for women: Supply or demand. In Black, D., & Phillips, H. C. J., *Making a difference: A frontier of firsts: Women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921–2012*. Parliament of Western Australia, 37–43.

In this chapter Betty Carter observes that research carried out by second-wave feminists provides a more accurate account of the campaign for woman's suffrage in Western Australia than was previously the case. Prior assertions have prejudiced perceptions of the significance of the efforts made by those agitating for suffrage during the 1890s. Pointing to evidence that highlights the efforts of the women actively campaigning in the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Karrakatta Club, she explains that women coveted the vote as a means of acquiring greater legal and social freedom and as a way of influencing broader social reforms on the home front.

According to Carter their efforts should not be underestimated and without them, Western Australia may not have been able to claim the honour of being the second Australian colony to achieve women's suffrage. She also reminds us that it was not until 1962 that Aboriginal voters (both female and male) could enrol and vote in the Legislative Assembly elections. Reference is also made to **Edith Cowan** and her role as the Recording Secretary for the Karrakatta Club.



Pioneer members of the Karrakatta Club. Edith Cowan can be seen in the centre.

Photo: Royal Western Australian Historical Society.

Caro, J. (Ed.). (2013). *Destroying the joint: Why women have to change the world.* Queensland University Press.

Edited by Jane Caro, this book comprises a provocative collection of essays, analysis, memoir, fiction, satire and tweets from women in response to comments by broadcaster Alan Jones about how women were 'destroying the joint'. These responses represent a wide cross-section of backgrounds, ages, beliefs, experiences and biases. **Dr Carmen Lawrence** contributes a chapter, 'We are destroying the joint', where she paints a glum picture of the state of the planet. Dr Lawrence argues that since most women have not, until recently, occupied significant positions of influence and power, they should be judged less culpable than men. She believes that as women are still in a minority in board rooms and executive positions, as well as in politics, it is 'pretty rich to blame women for the current state of affairs'. Rather, as she puts it, responsibility rests with those who have historically made decisions about the way that societies and economies are managed—'privileged, powerful, Western white males'. A thought-provoking contribution to a vexed issue.



Read:

Book, 272p

Chase, D., Krantz, V., & Jackson J. (1999). *A portrait of progress; Women in Western Australia 1899–1999.* Government of Western Australia.

Published in honour of the centenary of women's suffrage in Western Australia, this useful compendium details the achievements of Western Australian women to 1999. Each chapter focuses on key dimensions of women's lives since the vote was won. The foreword was written by **Rhonda Parker** who at that time was the Minister for Women's Interests.



Read:

Booklet, 96p



Read:

Book chapter, 14p

Choules, M. (2012). The right to sit. In Black, D., & Phillips, H. C. J., *Making a difference: A frontier of firsts: Women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921–2012*. Parliament of Western Australia, 32–46.

This chapter originally formed the first chapter of 'Women in West Australian parliamentary politics 1921–1968', a thesis submitted for an Honours degree in the Bachelor of Arts: Social Sciences at the Curtin University in 1988. It aims to fill the gap in paying attention to the circumstances surrounding women's rights to sit in Parliament. Choules contends that this topic is overshadowed by a substantial body of work on the granting of women's suffrage in Western Australia in 1899.



Read:

Journal article, 3p

<https://issuu.com/lswa/docs/brief-aug-2021/s/13039488>

Church, T. (2021). The women should have a voice. *Brief*, 48(4), 13–16.

In this article, the Law Society of Western Australia's Toni Church, museum curator, describes a new exhibition, 'The woman should have a voice', that celebrated the centenary of **Edith Cowan's** election and hosted at the Old Court House Law Museum. The exhibition focusses on Cowan's legacy of social justice and commemorates her enduring influence in the community. It describes some of the objects on display, loaned by the organisations that Cowan herself established and supported, and that are still operating in Western Australia including Ngala, King Edward Memorial Hospital, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Children's Court.

Constable, L. (2015). *Oral history interview with Dr Elizabeth Constable*. Interviewer: Ron Chapman. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH4510). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

In this interview **Dr Constable** talks to historian Ron Chapman about her early family life and childhood growing up in Sydney; school and university studies; living in the United States and returning to Perth to reside with her family and work in the education sector. She discusses her early involvement with the Liberal Party and the pre-selection process and her election in 1991 to the Legislative Assembly as an Independent.

The interview reflects and recounts her years as a member of the Legislative Assembly, where her contributions were notable. Dr Constable also spoke about her ministerial portfolios, noting that she was the first female Independent member to become a cabinet minister. She was responsible for Education, Tourism and Women's Interests in the 2008 Barnett Liberal minority government. The interviews took place between August 2014 and March 2015. The audio files are not available online, but are available for use in the State Library.



Listen:

Sound recording
(8 audio discs 9CD-
RW), 7 hr. 33 min)



Transcript:

Typescript, 126p



Read:

Book, 298p

Cowan, P. (1978). *A unique position: A biography of Edith Dircksey Cowan, 1861–1932*. University of Western Australia Press.

A biography of **Edith Cowan**, Australia's first woman elected to any Parliament in Australia, penned by Western Australian author—and her grandson—Peter Cowan. The biography traces her ancestry, her early life, marriage and family, and her development as a pioneer worker for social causes and the advancement of women's rights from the 1890s until her death. Using reference material from family scrapbooks, Edith Cowan's life is portrayed against the background of her time, which shaped her life, while showing that she in turn gave something to the shape of that time—the formative years in the history of the Western Australia. The book observes that Cowan was concerned with the lack of opportunity which the society at the time offered women in education, occupation, health and in common civil rights and details how her work helped to right these matters. Cowan travelled widely abroad and in Australia, and how this influenced her is also covered. Her election to Parliament, her parliamentary career, including her notable accomplishments and her memorial are also discussed.

Craig, J. (1987). *Oral history interview with Hon June Craig*. Interviewer: Ronda Jamieson. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH2001). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

This oral history memoir covers **June Craig**'s life and duties as a parliamentarian and of a minister, including campaigning and managing an electorate. She also talked about the challenges she encountered as a woman, seeking acceptance on ability alone and balancing several roles at once. When she was elected in 1974, she became the first woman member of the Legislative Assembly since Florence Cardell-Oliver (who had resigned in 1956), and remained the only woman member in the lower house until her defeat in 1983. There were only four women in the WA Parliament during this period. She discusses how in 1977, she was appointed as the Minister for Lands and Forests, the first woman cabinet minister in the Parliament for 24 years.



Listen:

Sound recording
(16 sound
cassettes,
15 hrs 10 mins)



Transcript:

Typescript, 346p

Tree planting by Queen Elizabeth II in the Government House gardens in 1977, watched on by June Craig, Minister for Lands and Forests. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0012746.

In 1978, Craig's portfolios changed and she became responsible for Local Government, Urban Development and Town Planning, which she retained until 1983, despite a change in leadership of the government. This period is covered in some detail as she recounts that during this time, she handled some very difficult portfolios and spoke of some of the controversies, as well as her achievements. The Parliamentary Liberal Party and its leadership were also discussed. Appendices includes a letter from Premier Charles Court addressing the 'certain amount of predictable comment from less kindly people to the effect that you had been brought into the Cabinet 'because she is a woman'. He assured her that she had been appointed to the Cabinet because he felt that she was the 'best one to do the job at that time, and not for other considerations' (p. 345). The transcript and audio files are available on request at the State Library of Western Australia. The transcript provides a useful index and contains some photographs.

**Dapin, M. (2003). Ms Lawrence regrets.
Good Weekend, 5 July 2003, 26-35.**

For this article, **Dr Carmen Lawrence** spoke to political journalist Mark Dapin about her experiences of political life. She revealed that she had doubts agreeing to be interviewed but decided to do it to 'close the circle'. In a frank interview she shared that she was 'tired of being the token Leftist in the shadow cabinet and had become disillusioned by the party's stance on war. She explained that she resigned from the shadow cabinet on 'principle' in December 2002 when the ALP's policy on asylum seekers was released. The article also delved into her background: a country upbringing, a family dedicated to community service, her educational pursuits, and her student activism against the Vietnam war. Her personal life, relationship status, her views on marriage, parenting, her appearance, and her domestic arrangements are also covered.

Dr Lawrence joined the Labor Party in 1979 and explained that she had done so when her reading had convinced her that 'it was better to be inside the system as a representative, or an activist, than outside trying to poke it'. Electoral politics and the part she played in it were also points of discussion. She reflected with regret on her role in passing mandatory sentencing legislation. Dr Lawrence also spoke about political leadership, her relationships with ALP colleagues, her future aspirations, and what might have been. The Easton petition, her recollections of how that event unfolded and the impact on her career were also mentioned. The article contains a number of images of Dr Lawrence, including some taken by Western Australian photographer, Frances Andrijich.



Read:

Magazine article, 9p



New ministers
Dr Carmen Lawrence
and Yvonne
Henderson joined
a Special Executive
Council Meeting
at Government
House, 25 Feb 1988.
*Photo: Westpix/
West Australian
Newspapers Limited
TWA-0134597.*



Read:

Book chapter, 11p

Davenport, C. (2000) Against the odds: Abortion law reform in Western Australia. In Davenport, C., Lawrence, C., & Deverall, K. (Eds). *Party girls: Labor women now*. Pluto Press, 88–99.

The book aims to progress the popular debate about women in politics beyond the issue of women's representation in parliament. This chapter, by **Cheryl Davenport**, contains reflections of a self-confessed feminist attempting to effect legislative change. Davenport was the architect and chief proponent of the bill amending the WA criminal code as it related to abortion. Drawing on a decade of experience as a parliamentarian, she explains in this article that the passage of the bill was controversial and the tenor of the parliamentary debates emotive. Despite this, the bill passed into law. She noted the difficulties in progressing 'moral' law reform.



Read:

Journal article, 5p

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.1998.994917>

Davenport, C. (1998). Achieving abortion law reform in Western Australia. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 13(28), 299–304.

In her own words, **Cheryl Davenport** provides a brief history of the abortion laws in Western Australia up to and including the introduction of her private member's bill and its extraordinary and ground breaking passage through the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. It covers the background and the need for legislative change, the events leading up to the bill being introduced and its ultimate passage through the Parliament.

Dawkins, J. (1984). Tribute to Grace Vaughan.
Australian Social Work, 37(1) 1, 2-4.

Former federal minister, Hon John Dawkins pays tribute to **Grace Vaughan** at the time of her sudden and untimely death. At that time, she was the President of the International Federation of Social Workers. According to Dawkins, despite her six-year membership of the Legislative Council, Vaughan could be 'better described as a political activist than a politician'. He also shares that he was a part of a 'small group of self-appointed talent scouts anxious to enhance the caucus who discovered Grace and persuaded her to run for office.' When elected in 1974, she could be relied on to pursue 'unfashionable causes' and was ever ready to remind the party of its 'true purpose'. He noted that when disappointment could have become despair, Vaughan provided direction and determination.



Read:

Journal article, 3p

[https://doi.org/
10.1080/031240
78408549790](https://doi.org/10.1080/03124078408549790)



Grace Vaughan looks over the freeway extensions site, 9 April 1975. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134591.



Read:

Book 294p

Doogue, G. (2014). *The climb: Conversations with Australian women in power*. The Text Publishing Company, 63–82.

Based on candid and personal conversations with fourteen Australian women about what it is like to be a woman in power in contemporary Australia, journalist Geraldine Doogue delves into leadership, gender and representation. Chapter 4 features a frank interview with **Alannah MacTiernan** ‘on crashing through’.

From 1988 to 2023, MacTiernan served in politics at a local, state and federal level. She was a member in both the Legislative Council (twice) and the Legislative Assembly in the Parliament of Western Australia. She also served as a minister in successive Labor state governments.



Hon Alannah MacTiernan delivers her valedictory speech in the Legislative Council ahead of her retirement, 2022. Photo: ABC / Keane Bourke.

Doust, K. [2021] *Interview with the President of the Legislative Council, the Hon Kate Doust MLC.* Interviewer Michael Loney. Parliament of Western Australia.

Michael Loney interviews **Hon Kate Doust**, the first woman to be elected as President of the Legislative Council. She discusses the election, the role of the President and her aspirations during her term in office.

Doust reflects on her appointment, noting its historical significance. She discusses the challenges of the role in managing expectations in the chamber so that everyone can have their say and be heard without interruption.



Watch:

Video, 2.58 mins

<https://youtu.be/BJhUlv-Qr0M>



Hon Kate Doust was the first woman elected as President of the Legislative Council in Western Australia in 2017. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134523.



Read:

https://www.aspg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2016winter31_1.pdf

Drum, M. (2016). How well do parliamentary committees connect with the public? *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, 31(1), 42–59.

Dr Martin Drum, Associate Professor in Politics and International Relations at the University of Notre Dame Australia in Fremantle, Western Australia provides the results of his 2015 survey of committee members active in the thirty-eighth Parliament. The survey focussed on garnering insights from these members about committee engagement. Features insights from members active in the parliamentary committees: MLAs **Lisa Baker, Josie Farrer** and **Margaret Quirk**. MLCs: **Robyn McSweeney, Kate Doust** and **Liz Bejhat**.



Read:

Book, childrens, 76p

Drummond, A. ([2014]). *Edith Cowan. Green Barrow Publishing. Glenn Lumsden, illustrator.*

Aimed at the generalist reader, this is a useful classroom resource linked to the Australian history curriculum. This illustrated book introduces primary and secondary school-age children to the 'Aussie Notables' featured on Australian bank notes. Here students are introduced to **Edith Cowan** explaining in an audience-appropriate manner how she overcame family tragedy in her childhood to become the first woman elected to any Australian parliament. Her pre and post parliamentary career and achievements are noted.

Duncan, W. (2019). *Oral history interview with Wendy Duncan*. Interviewer: Anne Yardley. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH4338). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

The interviews with **Wendy Duncan** took place at Parliament House, in fourteen sessions (of approximate duration of one hour each), between June 2017 and February 2019. In this interview Duncan discusses growing up on the family pastoral property and station life; education; major influences; her political development; National Party activities; and her career in the Western Australian Parliament. She discusses the many positions she held while in Parliament, namely: Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development and Lands; Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development and Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly from 2013 to 2017.



Listen:

[Sound recording (14 audio cassettes, 16 hr. 5 min)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b5964914_1



Transcript:

Typescript, 284p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b5964914_1

Wendy Duncan with her book about the history of the National Party in Western Australia. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited KGM-0010407.

In addition, she was a member of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs and the Parliamentary Services Committee. She reflects on the issues she encountered at that time in these roles. Elected to the party's state executive in 2003, she became the party's first woman state president in 2004. Together with Brendon Grylls, Duncan developed the Royalties for Regions scheme and was instrumental in steering the Nationals to a balance of power position in both Houses at the 2008 election. Having served in both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly over a fourteen-year period, she chose not to contest the 2017 election.



Read:

Book, 407p

Duncan, W. (2014). Introduction: Representing regional Western Australians. In Layman, L., & Duncan, W. (Eds). *Blood nose politics: A centenary history of the Western Australian National Party, 1913–2013. The Nationals WA, 1–4.*

Written by the then member for Kalgoorlie **Wendy Duncan**, this chapter details the nuances of representing regional Western Australia. Duncan was also elected the first female president of the National Party in 2004. The book details the history of the party in Western Australia since its inception in 1913. It chronicles how support, based on geography, has delivered the party considerable influence over the last century despite receiving less than ten per cent of the overall state vote. Touches on the landmark election of **Winifred (Win) Piesse** in 1977, the first woman to represent the Country Party in the state Parliament. Also includes references to contributions by **Dr Hilda Turnbull**, **Mia Davies** and **Jacqui Boydell**.

Edwards, H. & Grzegorzolka, A. (2014). *Edith Cowan: A quiet woman of note*. New Frontier Publishing.

As part of the 'Aussie Heroes' series, this book introduces primary-aged children to the life and work of **Edith Cowan**. It focuses on how she overcame a difficult early life to dedicate her life to social and political reform, and became the first woman elected to an Australian parliament.



Read:

Book, childrens,
116p



Listen:

Sound recording
(5 CD-RW),
4 hr. 46 min

Open access, but can
only be accessed in
the State Library.



Transcript:

Typescript, 105p

Edwardes, C. (2010). *Oral history interview with Cheryl Edwardes*. Interviewer: Gail O'Hanlon. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH3949). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

This interview provides insights into **Cheryl Edwardes'** early life, her studies, her family and her political involvement and activities with the Liberal Party which led to her being elected as the member for Kingsley in 1989. At the time she was the only female from her party in the Parliament. Many of her constituents from the Kingsley Football Club were impacted by the Bali bombing and she talks about this period from the perspective of the local member. From the time of her election Edwardes occupied several shadow ministerial appointments and became a minister in the Court Liberal Government.



Cheryl Edwardes was the first woman to be appointed as the Attorney General in Western Australia.
Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134588.

In the interview Edwardes comments on a number of events that occurred during her time in opposition, including the WA Inc Royal Commission, the Easton petition, and the inquiry into the Women's Information and Referral Exchange (WIRE). In February 1993, following the election of the Court Liberal Government, Edwardes became the first female Attorney-General to be appointed in Western Australia. She discusses the legislation that she dealt with, including censorship, juvenile crime, victims of crime, corruption and law reform more generally. The interview contains her views on the controversies she and her family faced, the reorganisation of the Ministry of Justice, the Royal Commission into the Wanneroo City Council and the role of women in parliament.

Edwardes also provides her thoughts on the Regional Forest Agreement process and the restructuring of the Department of Conservation and Land Management when she was the Minister for the Environment. Edwardes shared that while her appointment as Minister for Family and Children's Services had been short (11 months), it was her favourite; explaining that she felt it was fulfilling and it dealt with family and children. She also provides insights into her relationships with her contemporaries in the WA Parliament at the time and being described as a role model. Her other strong memories of her time in parliament are of the parliamentary process itself; learning the protocols, standing orders, conversations in corridors and respecting each other's different policies. This series of interviews took place over four sessions from 8 May to 20 November 2010.



Read:

Speech notes, 14p

Available in the
WA State Library

Elliott, L. (1986). *Speech to Labor Women's luncheon, Saturday 15th March 1986.*

On Saturday, 15 March 1986, **Lyla Elliott** was invited to address the Labor Women's luncheon on her retirement from the Legislative Council. From these typed speech notes it can be seen that she discussed the history of the Australian Labor Party in the 1950s to 1970s and her thirty-three-year involvement with the party. She noted the active role that the Labor Women's organisation and social clubs played over the years and especially in the 1920s and 1930s, a time of great hardship in Western Australia. Elliott observed that by the time she commenced work for the ALP as a 'very junior office girl' (p. 5) in 1952, the Labor women's movement was not as active as it had been in earlier years. She described one of her first tasks—minute taker at the 19th State Congress as a 'fairly daunting experience for a green inexperienced teenager to be perched up on a stage facing over 150 delegates.' (p. 5).

She also spoke of her belief that both Dorothy Tangney and **May Holman** had been 'robbed' of ministerial postings. The election of **Florence Cardell-Oliver** is also mentioned. She spoke of her admiration of **Ruby Hutchison** and all that she had achieved, including her role as a delegate in 1955 at the Hobart Conference and in 'saving' the ALP from the forces of the extreme right. She also explained that it was Ruby Hutchison who 'talked me into standing for her seat' (p. 13). After sitting as a lone woman in the Parliament for three years she discusses being joined by two Liberals **June Craig** and **Margaret McAleer** in 1974. She points to the 'rebirth or flowering of the Women's Movement throughout Australia in the early 1970s which provided the impetus both inside and outside the Labor Party for a better deal for women.' (p. 14). In support of this she cites the growth of Labor women in the WA Parliament from one in 1971 to eight in 1986 and the appointment of **Kay Hallahan** and **Pam Beggs** as ministers, and **Pam Buchanan** as the first female Labor Whip in the Legislative Assembly.

Elliot, L. (1987). *Oral history interview with Lyla Elliott*. Interviewer: Ronda Jamieson. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH01761). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

In this revealing interview **Lyla Elliott** talks about her early life and her decision to run for the Legislative Council at the urging of **Ruby Hutchison**. She recounts her experience of being the only female member in the WA Parliament when elected to the Legislative Council in 1971. Elliott speaks of her treatment by members and staff and strongly criticised what she saw as the unfairness of an electoral system whereby conservative parties had control of the upper house. Her work in the Parliament and in the community was outlined, including her dislike of making public speeches—a factor that contributed to her decision to retire from parliamentary service. The interview also mentions her dealings with the Australian Labor Party and working alongside Joe Chamberlain for the period 1952 to 1984.



Listen:

Sound recording:
13 sound cassettes,
12 hours,
30 minutes

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b1807747_1



Transcript:

Typescript, 105p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b1807747_26

Winner, Francesca Hodge accepted Edith Cowan Essay Award from Lyla Elliott and John Tonkin at the Edith Cowan memorial clock tower, 17 October 1985.
Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134595.



Read:

Book, 1p

Erickson, R. (Ed). (1987). Cowan, Edith Dircksey, *The Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians pre-1829–1888, vol. 1, p. 684.*

A brief entry for **Edith Cowan** in a paragraph style which provides a quick reference guide to her biographical details.



Read:

Journal article, 3p

Farrelly, B. (1997) Green, gay and call me Giz. *Lesbians on the loose. 8(2), February 1997, 3, 9-10.*

This article celebrates the election of **Giz Watson** to the Legislative Council. It introduces Watson as the only member in Australia that can lay claim to: building a BMX bike track in Brixton, blockading military bases in Spain, protesting in London against the Falklands war, joining the women's peace camp at Greenham Common; saving the native forests of Western Australia; and being the country's first out lesbian MP. The article details her early life as a 'ten-pound pom' that she had to change her name by deed poll as she couldn't use her preferred moniker, 'Giz' on the ballot paper.



Hon Giz Watson MLC.
*Photo: Supplied,
Tashi Hall.*

Fitzherbert, M. (2013). Liberal women in Parliament: What do the numbers tell us and where to. *Papers on Parliament*, 59.

This paper was originally presented in the Senate Occasional Lecture Series at Parliament House, Canberra, on 31 August 2012. Here Margaret Fitzherbert delved into the history of parliamentary representation by women members of the Liberal Party. The article focused on the number of liberal women elected over the years, comparing them to the ALP. She noted that her emphasis on the numbers was deliberate given that '[n]umbers are the atom of politics. Nothing is possible without them.' (p. 1). She mentioned **Florence Cardell-Oliver** as the first woman—a Liberal—to be appointed as a minister in Australia in 1947 in the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia. Also mentioned are the influences of the Australian Women's National League (AWNL), Menzies' Forgotten People, quotas and merit-based preselections, and party culture and their influence on the election of women to parliament.



Read:

Online resource, 14p

https://www.aph.gov.au/-/media/05_About_Parliament/52_Sen/524_Research_and_education/Papers_on_Parliament/pop59/pdf/c01.pdf?la=en&hash=4D8C1EF27BA560E4B00F41A652C7802A6FB7065



New ministers are sworn in at Government House, 2016. (Left to right) Andrea Mitchell, Premier Colin Barnett, Governor Kerry Sanderson, Sean L'Estrange and Donna Faragher. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0042195.



Read:

Book chapter, 12p

Fischer, T. (2000). Women's voting behaviour: Patterns and explanations of the gender gap in Australia. In Black, D., & Phillips, H. C. J., *Making a difference: A frontier of firsts: Women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921–2012*. Parliament of Western Australia, 44–56.

This chapter contributes to the body of work contained in David Black and Dr Harry Phillip's book, 'Making a Difference', and is concerned with the difference in voting behaviour between women and men, often termed the 'gender gap'. It examines the patterns of women's voting behaviour and possible explanations for the gender gap in Australia with examples from Western Australia. Fischer's research shows that women do not vote as a group and other factors impact their voting behaviour. It also provides an overview of significant factors such as compulsory voting, party identification, age, religion, education and work-force participation. The chapter contains useful tables and a statistical analysis of women in parliament.



International
Womens' Day,
Parliament House,
2022. Photo:
Supplied, Simone
McGurk.

Freeman, J. (2020). *In conversation with Dr Lebbie Hopkins: The magnificent life of Miss May Holman.*

In a series of seven short online video conversations, **Janine Freeman**, then the member for Mirrabooka speaks with Dr Lebbie Hopkins about her book, 'The Magnificent Life of Miss May Holman'. Dr Hopkins points out that **May Holman** was the first woman from the Labor Party elected to any Australian Parliament. Holman is described as a practical idealist and an unconventional woman with a lifelong commitment to integrity, dignity and purpose. The relationship, similarities and differences between **Edith Cowan** and May Holman's pre-selection and election to Parliament are also discussed. The conversation mentions Holman's commitment to worker safety and her advocacy for women, South West timber workers and their families. It is noted that Holman's 1926 *Occupational Health and Safety Bill* was heralded internationally as one of the finest pieces of legislation to come before a parliament on the issue. Her talents for diplomacy, a capacity for hard work and idealism are also topics of discussion. The relationship between this remarkable woman and her constituents is featured, including her 'knock on the kitchen door' approach.



Watch:

Video 7 episodes.
~5-7 mins

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/7221655>



Janine Freeman and Premier Mark McGowan in the Legislative Assembly, 2021. Photo: Supplied, Janine Freeman.



Watch:

Video recording,
6.29 mins

<https://www.janinefreeman.com/emilys-list>

Freeman, J. (2018). *A woman's right to choose: Abortion Amendment Act 1998*. Emily's List.

In this short video, former members **Cheryl Davenport** and **Diana Warnock** are captured discussing the decriminalising of abortion in Western Australia with the passing of the *Abortion Amendment Act 1998*. Sitting in their respective chambers twenty years on, they recall the unprecedented circumstances that led to this significant legislative change. Their reflections of the experience are revealing and informative. They discuss what led to the historic debate in 1998 and the difficult passage of the bill, including the 'awful amendments' in the lower house and their 'incredible battle'. Conscience votes are also covered. They share insights into the public reaction to the issue, including vile abuse and 'enormous' support. Warnock reflects that she is 'glad' that they invested so much energy on it explaining that '... it was one hundred per cent worth it even if it was extraordinarily painful'. For Davenport, there was no doubting how 'tough' it was, noting security concerns for her safety and well-being. However, it never occurred to her not to pursue the issue. Evident throughout the video is how immensely proud both women are of the work they did in making a difference for women in Western Australia.

Cheryl Davenport and Diana Warnock photographed together after the passing of the abortion bill, 8 May 1998. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited SUN-1406646.



Gilchrist, D. J. & Brooks, G. (2023). The history and impact of women in the Parliament of Western Australia: From golden age to disappointment. *Australian Feminist Studies*.

With support from the Parliament of Western Australia's Parliamentary History Committee, David Gilchrist and Grace Brooks examined the history and impact of women in the Parliament of Western Australia. Their research noted that despite their significant contributions the role of women in the public sphere has historically been overlooked and this may have been due to cultural and structural prejudice. To remedy this, the article assessed the body of scholarly work that had focused on women serving as members in the WA Parliament. Gilchrist and Brooks found that the literature identified three phases of women's engagement, namely: the first, the 'age of individuals' where a select few pioneering women entered the parliament due to a variety of historical specificities; the second, the 'age of Labor women', acknowledged that the 1983 Burke government adopted affirmative action policies that saw a significant increase of women MPs hailing from the Labor Party; and thirdly the 'age of disappointment'. For this phase the literature underscored the bipartisan deprioritising of women's policy issues in the 1990s–2000s, alongside the existence of continuing barriers to gender equality in Australian parliamentary politics. Suggestions for further research are also identified in the article, including the impact of neoliberalism on women's representation, and the emergence of intersectionality as a key paradigm in women's studies.



Read:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08164649.2023.2280976>



Women MLAs in the fortieth Parliament, 2017. (Left to right) Emily Hamilton, Robyn Clarke, Cassie Rowe, Jessica Stojkovski, Jessica Shaw, Lisa O'Malley. Front: Amber-Jade Sanderson and Sabine Winton. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0126152.



Griffith, G. (2010). *Minority governments in Australia 1989–2009: Accords, charters and agreements*. New South Wales Parliamentary Library Background Paper, March 2010.

Read:

Online resource,
41p

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/researchpapers/Documents/minority-governments-in-australia-1989-2009-acco/Minority%20Governments%20Background%20Paper.pdf>

In this research paper, Gareth Griffith discussed the political phenomenon of minority governments in the Australian states and territories in Australia between 1989 and 2009. Griffith defined the various models and provided commentary on their application, including in Western Australia where an ersatz coalition was formed in 2008. In that instance a collection of balance of power holders were united in respect of a particular social or economic interest which they wished to defend, but otherwise did not wish to challenge the government or the broader status quo (p. 73). Griffith provided a detailed chronology of minority governments, including the 2008 Liberal/National Government in Western Australia and the role that Independents **Dr Liz Constable** and **Dr Janet Woollard** played. Includes useful tables on all aspects of minority governments with comparisons with other jurisdictions.



Independent Dr Liz Constable, pictured with Phillip Pandal and Larry Graham after the 2001 election. *Photo: Ross Swanborough/Newspix NPX126157.*

Hallahan, K. (2012). *Oral history interview with Kay Hallahan*. Interviewer: Ronda Jamieson. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH3994). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

In conversation with Ronda Jamieson, **Kay Hallahan** recalls her experiences as a woman in public office between 1983 and 1996. In this series of five interviews, conducted between August 2011 and December 2012, she discusses her family life, education, and career—noting that when she joined the police force in 1969, she had to leave when she got married. Joining the Labor Party in 1976, Hallahan was successful in winning the seat of South East Metropolitan province in the Legislative Council at the 1983 election. She shares her experiences of becoming the first female member of the Legislative Council to hold a ministerial post when appointed as the Minister for Community Services, Family, Youth, Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs in 1986. Hallahan had responsibility for overseeing the introduction of measures such as the seniors' card, a poverty package, and the bicycle rebate scheme. She recounts the highs and lows of her time in both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. Appendices contain a useful list of activities, community service and honours awarded to Hallahan.



Listen:

Sound recording
(21 audio files),
6 hr. 49 min

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b4091435_1



Transcript:

Typescript, 94p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b4091435_22

Premier of Western Australia, Dr Carmen Lawrence and the local member for Armadale, Kay Hallahan discuss problem areas for crime with local police, 1994. *Photo: Marcelo Palacios, Community Newspaper Group, via Birtwistle Local Studies Library. FPH238.*



Read:

Book, 1015p

Henderson, Y. (2009). Equal opportunity legislation. In Gregory, J., & Gothard, J. (Eds). *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, UWA Press, 333–4.

Written by **Yvonne Henderson**, this entry provides an overview of the history of equal opportunity legislation in Western Australia. Henderson is well acquainted with the topic and brings her unique insights into detailing a history that can be traced back to comments made by **Edith Cowan** about women being placed on equal terms as men in the Legislative Assembly in 1923. Yet it wasn't until 1984 that the Equal Opportunity bill was introduced into the Parliament by the newly elected Labor Premier Brian Burke. At that time, he took the unusual step of delegating the passage of the bill through the Legislative Assembly to the backbench member for Gosnells, Yvonne Henderson—the author of this entry. Also included is a description of the objectives of the act, how its scope has expanded over the years, and it contains some relevant statistics. Suggestions for further reading both within the encyclopedia itself and external sources are provided.

Henningham, N. (2011). *Carmen Lawrence interviewed by Nikki Henningham in the Women and leadership in a century of Australian democracy oral history project*. National Library of Australia Oral History Collection. ORAL TRC 6290/25.

As part of the 'Women and leadership in a century of Australian democracy oral history project', Nikki Henningham interviewed **Dr Carmen Lawrence**. In the interview Dr Lawrence speaks about her childhood; her schooling and education; her interest in music; University of Western Australia; faith; her father; travelling; her psychology PhD; her child; the beginning of her political life; Women's Electoral Lobby; feminism; the Western Australian Institute of Technology; work-life balance; the Department of Medicine, WA; Australian Labor Party (ALP); standing and winning the seat for Subiaco in the 1986 election; her road to becoming Premier of Western Australia; Brian Burke; transparency in government; the Royal Commission into Commercial Activities of Government and Other Matters, 1990; the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1987; law reform; Paul Keating; federal politics; leadership qualities; the Easton Royal Commission, 1995; her role as the ALP President; her preference for cooperative organisations and how effective they can be. In addition to the sound recording, a detailed timed summary is also available.



Listen:

Sound recording,
102 mins.

Digital master
available National
Library of Australia.
10p timed summary
also available



Read:

Online resource,
49p

[https://ro.ecu.edu.au/
ecuworks/6841](https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6841)

Hetherington, P., & Merrick, H. (Ed). *Herstories— Our history: Bibliography of Western Australian Women's History*. Edith Cowan University.

Edited by Helen Merrick, this bibliography by Penelope Hetherington contains citations to books, articles, and dissertations on the history of Western Australian women and children from 1900 to 1998. It is a useful guide to, and map of, the historiography of women's history in Western Australia. It contains references to **Edith Cowan, Dr Judyth Watson** and **Linda Savage**.

Hodgson, H. (2008). *Oral history interview with Helen Hodgson*. Interviewer: Ron Chapman. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH3879). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

In this interview, conducted in December 2008, and spanning just over two hours **Helen Hodgson** reminisces about her family life, her educational pursuits, and her experience as a public servant before being elected to the Legislative Council in 1996. She provides insights into the internal organisation of the Australian Democrats at both state and national levels. Following her election as the member for the North Metropolitan region, she joined Norm Kelly in becoming the first Australian Democrats to be elected to the Legislative Council. It was also at this time that the Democrats, along with the Greens found themselves holding the balance of power in the Legislative Council. Throughout the interview, Hodgson provides her personal views about issues which were of particular interest to her and which she became closely involved in parliament, including native title legislation, abortion law reform, anti-discrimination against gay, lesbian and transgender people, and rehabilitation of offenders.



Listen:

Sound recording:
3 audio files, 2 hr.
3 min

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b3787025_47



Transcript:

Typescript, 37p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b3787025_1

Following her election as the member for the North Metropolitan region, Helen Hodgson joined Norm Kelly in becoming the first Australian Democrats to be elected to the Legislative Council in 1996. Photo: Westpix/ West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134589.



Read:

Book, 65p

Holman, M., & Watson, J. (Ed.). (1995). *Remarks of an inexperienced traveller abroad*. Judyth Watson (Publisher).

Compiled by **Dr Judyth Watson** with the help of **May Holman's** sisters Sheila Moiler and Eileen Thomson, this publication reveals that when Holman was appointed as Australia's substitute delegate to the Assembly of the League of Nations meeting in Geneva in 1930, it was her first time travelling overseas. The Melbourne Herald Group had commissioned her to write a series of articles and these form the basis of this resource. It also includes copies of the numerous letters that Holman wrote to her family. These firsthand accounts reveal Holman's palpable excitement at travelling abroad and provide insights into some of her experiences, namely meeting the Pope, observing the opening of the British Parliament, attending the thirtieth annual conference of the British Labour Party, and visiting the Parliament of the Irish Free State.



May Holman can be seen in the foreground (marked with a blue 'X') and seated at a parliamentary banquet in the Royal Gallery in the House of Lords, 1930. *Photo: State Library of Western Australia.*

Hopkins, L. (2016). *The magnificent life of Miss May Holman: Australia's first female Labor parliamentarian*. Fremantle Press.

The book charts the life of **May Holman**, Australia's first female Labor parliamentarian. It details the barriers she encountered as a woman in politics and the methods she applied in overcoming them. The book is an important addition to the collective knowledge of Western Australian political and social history. The preface was written by **Dr Carmen Lawrence** and **Dr Judyth Watson** contributed supplementary textual content.



Read:

Book, 237p

Hopkins, L., & Roarty, L. (2010). *Among the chosen: The life story of Pat Giles*. Fremantle Press.

In a thoughtful foreword, co-authors **Cheryl Davenport** and Joan Kirner introduce the reader to the subject of Lekkie Hopkins' and Lynn Roarty's biography, former Senator for Western Australia, Pat Giles. Both Davenport and Kirner shared that Giles had been a role model and a mentor to them. To countless others her capacity to listen and to advocate for those less powerful was inspiring. The book provides a personal context for Giles' public life and a public context for her personal life. It covers her early life, her 'politicisation', her role in the Women's Electoral Lobby, in the trade union movement, the Senate and her international work. Davenport and Kirner observe that her special brand of activism paved the way for women to achieve greater status and equality in many areas, namely in the trade union movement, the Australian Labor Party, and in both federal and state parliaments. She is described as a tireless advocate who worked from within the established order to effect social change.



Read:

Biography, 288p



Read:

Online resource,
61p

https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/7N3T6/upload_binary/7N3T6.pdf

Hough, A., Wilson, J., & Black, D. (2020). *Women parliamentarians in Australia 1921–2020. Research paper series 2020–2021. Politics and Public Administration Section, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia.*

This work updates 'Women parliamentarians in Australia 1921–2013' by Janet Wilson and David Black. It comprises a series of tables listing, by parliament, the women elected since 1921. The tables include their age at taking their seats, party affiliation, names of the electoral districts they represented, dates of service, and the way in which their period of service ended (whether they were defeated, retired, resigned, disqualified or died). A table showing women who have been Members of more than one Australian House of Parliament, and women elected to Australian parliaments classified according to party of first endorsement is also included. It also includes lists of the women by the date of their election in 15 time periods: ten-year periods from 1921 to 1969, and five-year periods since 1970. The lists are followed by tables summarising the numbers elected since 1921 and the changing percentage of representation since 1970. A useful source of comparative statistical data relating to women in Australian Parliaments.

Hughes, J. (2018). *Oral history interview with Judy Hughes*. Interviewer: Jennie Carter. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH4343). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

For this interview historian Jennie Carter talks with **Judy Hughes** about her family background, her education, her business interests and her community work. She also discusses her keen interest in local government politics, and how this led to her foray into state politics. Representing the Labor party, she was elected to the seat of Kingsley in 2005 in a close contest. Leadership changes in the party, electoral boundary changes and the 'snap' 2008 election are discussed. Hughes reflects on the disappointment she felt in losing her seat and her life after politics, the financial hardship she endured and the difficulty she faced in gaining employment. Despite these setbacks, and the feeling that being a politician was construed as being a 'liability' when job seeking (p. 149), she shared that she didn't regret her time as a parliamentarian. The interviews took place in June/July 2017, with a supplementary interview on the 8 August 2018.



Listen:

Sound recording
(11 audio files),
8 hrs, 10 min

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b5967939_1



Transcript:

Typescript, 170p



Read:

Online resource, 59p

https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/researchpapers/Documents/Women%20in%20Parliament_FINAL_19NOV2018.pdf

Ismay, L. (2018). *Women in Parliament. Briefing paper. No. 2/2018. New South Wales Parliamentary Research Service.*

This briefing paper provides analysis of the current situation (as of 2018) for women in parliament across all the Australian jurisdictions. The paper builds on the discussion of issues considered by an earlier publication, published in 2003 by the New South Wales Parliamentary Research Service, including barriers to women's representation and the use of quotas. To provide context on the current situation, the paper starts with a statistical snapshot of women's representation in Australia. Ismay asks to what extent the number of women in parliament matters and explores the concepts of symbolic and substantive representation. Ismay examines the role of two institutions central to improving women's representation, namely: the political party and the parliament itself. She observes that as the number of elected women grows, so too does the need for a parliament to adapt to suit the requirements of all members. She notes some of the gender-sensitive initiatives taken by parliaments. She also uses best practice case studies as a comparator and hopes they serve as a potential source of future inspiration for change. Includes quotes, extensive footnotes, useful charts and statistical tables.

Judd, N. (2022). Adversity and achievement with June Craig & Louise Daw. Interviewed by Neville Judd from HxGN Radio. *Mining Matters*, 8 March 2022.

HxGN Radio is global technology company's Hexagon's podcast channel that serves as a platform for industry thought leaders to share stories of innovation and success. One such 'success story' features former minister **June Craig** in conversation with her granddaughter. Louise Daw, a former Western Australia entrepreneur of the year, says her grandmother is a mentor. According to the interview, for almost a decade the media described Craig as 'the most powerful woman in the state'. The interview discusses Craig's background, her pathway to parliament, the gendered comments directed at her when doorknocking, her 'curiosity value' and her personal experience in a male dominated workplace remembering that she was only the second woman in Western Australia to serve as a government minister during her nine years in Parliament, when she was the only serving woman.



Listen:

Sound recording,
18.36 mins

https://soundcloud.com/hxgnradio/mining-matters-adversity-and-achievement-with-june-craig-louise-daw?utm_source=clipboard&utm_campaign=wtshare&utm_medium=widget&utm_content=https%253A%252F%252Fsoundcloud.com%252Fhxgnradio%252Fmining-matters-adversity-and-achievement-with-june-craig-louise-daw

June Craig with Parliament House in the background, 1980. *Photo: State Library of Western Australia.*



Read:

Journal article, 24p

<https://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/phrj/article/view/470/502>

Kean, H. (2007). Public histories of Australian and British women's suffrage: Some comparative issues. *Public History Review*, 14, 1–24.

An interesting article on the difficulties in 'celebrating' a centenary for the women's vote in Australia since this might appear to legitimise the exclusion of Aboriginal women and men. Aboriginal people in Western Australia received the right to vote on the same terms in 1962. Author, Heather Kean argues that the politics of the present have 'problematized the past'. She makes the point that clock towers are revered as symbols of authority in memorialising public figures observing that the clock tower dedicated to **Edith Cowan** comprises a small bust on the clock rather than a statue or monument in King's Park itself—a place traditionally reserved for figures of a particular idea of national importance. Also notes the background to the sculptures comprising the 'Bookleaf Memorial' near the Water Garden Pavilion that commemorates the Centenary of Women's Suffrage.

Kennedy, P. (2019). Chapter 8: Australia's first woman premier. Carmen Lawrence 1990–93. *Tales from Boomtown* (Revised and updated ed). University of Western Australia Press, 172–93.

In this revised and updated book, well known Western Australian political journalist, Peter Kennedy traces the political career of **Dr Carmen Lawrence**. He starts by remarking that at four years and four days, Dr Lawrence's transition from member of the Legislative Assembly to Premier was the shortest of any premier since World War II. The chapter delves into her family background, her education, her foray into student politics, her preselection and her election in a previously conservative seat, Subiaco in 1986. It also covers her time as a backbencher, her parliamentary committee work and her appointment as a minister. Chiefly though, the chapter details the period 1990 to 1993 when Dr Lawrence succeeded Peter Dowding as Premier.

The political wranglings, leadership tussles and the issues that dominated her premiership are also noted. Her relationship with her brother and his calls for a royal commission are also discussed. The adverse findings of the royal commission and its ensuing fallout also feature, as does the Easton petition, the legal proceedings that followed and her reflections on this period. Successes, including the introduction of freedom of information laws, compulsory bike helmets, the appointment of a director of public prosecutions and the completion of the electrified Perth-Joondalup railway are highlighted. An informative account of an interesting era in WA politics, the chapter concludes with her move to the federal Parliament and life after politics. The chapter draws on interviews with Dr Lawrence herself, her parliamentary colleagues and other key 'players' at that time.



Read:

Book chapter, 21p



Read:

Journal article, 33p

<https://issuu.com/lswa/docs/brief-aug-2021/s/13039488>

Law Society of Western Australia. (2021). Trailblazing women of law in Western Australia: Leading the way: Hon Cheryl Edwardes, AM. *Brief*, 48(4), 7–39, at p. 20.

This special issue commemorates the centenary anniversary of **Edith Cowan** being elected as the first woman to any Australian Parliament. It also pays homage to her bill, the *Women’s Legal Status Act 1923*, which opened pathways for women to participate more fully in the legal profession in Western Australia. For this series of articles, the Law Society of Western Australia interviewed trailblazing female leaders of the legal profession—the first women to be appointed in their positions. **Cheryl Edwardes**, the first woman Attorney-General in Western Australia is featured. Here Edwardes discusses her proudest achievements, her career motivations, challenges and memorable roles, and reflects on her life as a woman in parliament and in the law.

Lawrence, C. (2017). Women, sexism, and politics: Does psychology help? *Griffith Journal of Law & Human Dignity*, 5, 52–67.

Written nearly a decade after resigning her seat of Fremantle, in this peer reviewed article **Dr Carmen Lawrence** reflects on her experiences in dealing with sexism throughout her political career. Lawrence recounts that her capacity to ignore personal vilification had become so well-developed that she stopped responding to sexist behaviour and taunts. In the article she questioned the extent to which women were still seen as outsiders in politics, residing at the margins; that women politicians were exceptions, 'diversions from the serious male game of politics'. She observed that while there has been a lot of change, maleness was still the norm and the set of attitudes, ideas, and interests that come with being male were still taken as given. Dr Lawrence was of the view that in order to have an open and representative democracy, it was critical that men's privileged occupancy of positions of power and influence were no longer considered as the norm. As she put it, we must '[a]damantly, repeatedly, and loudly' insist that women must be equal participants in society, and that sexism must be called out as that was the 'only way to render such conclusions obsolete'.

Lawrence, C., (2015). The memory ladder. *Griffith Review*, 51, 24–31.

According to **Dr Carmen Lawrence**, psychology should be at the heart of good public policy. Drawing on her experience as a former Premier, she found that this was not often the case. In this review of the literature about the accuracy of memory in eye-witness testimony, she makes the point that many policy makers assume they know all that they need to know about human behaviour. However, as she notes, a moment's thought should make it clear that success in addressing complex problems requires a rudimentary understanding of human behaviour and cognition, and the biological and social forces that shape us.



Read:

Journal article, 15p

<https://griffithlawjournal.org/index.php/gjlhd/article/view/910/830>



Read:

Journal article, 7p



Read:

Book, 144p

Lawrence, C. (2006). *Fear and politics*. Scribe Publications.

This book is based on a series of lectures that former Premier **Dr Carmen Lawrence** was commissioned to present by the Freilich Foundation in 2005. The political manipulation of fear and the effect that this has on Australian society was the focus of the book. She examined the role that fear played in public life and in the arousal of bigotry—fear of the other, fear of crime, fear of annihilation and fear of the status quo. According to Dr Lawrence, fear sells and it gets governments elected and for the sake of democracy she implores both women and men to think for themselves.



Read:

Book chapter, 18p

Lawrence, C. (2000). The gender gap in political behaviour. In Deverall, K., Huntley, R., Sharpe, P., & Tilly, J. (Eds). *Party girls: Labor women now*. Pluto Press, 204–22.

The stated aim of this book is to prompt the expansion of Labor women taking their own work, their own stories and their own ideas into the public sphere. In one such chapter, **Dr Carmen Lawrence** observes that academic interest in gender differences has arisen from a broader study of what influences political behaviour, including voting patterns, interest in politics, party identification, views on personal political efficacy, trust and confidence in political parties, participation in political affairs and opinions on key public policy issues. Yet, as she observes, interest by political parties in this behaviour stems from a desire to maximise votes. Dr Lawrence suggests that unless political parties seek to mobilise these differences into partisan support they may be of little consequence.

Lawrence, C. (1999). In Labor: Carmen Lawrence. In Eveline, J. & Hayden, L. (Eds) *Carrying the banner: Women, leadership and activism in Australia*. UWA Press. 56–68.

Published at a time when the State was celebrating the centenary of white female suffrage, this anthology of, and by, twenty-two Western Australian women leaders, results in an eclectic mix of disclosures by women, including former Premier **Dr Carmen Lawrence**. Using an interview format, her chapter begins with the aftermath of the 1995 royal commission into the abuse of executive power and provides a cautionary tale of the woman who dared venture into the big league of parliamentary politics. Drawing on her experiences she explains comments on the tension between the exercise of power, the ability to give it away, the capacity to empower others. She also discusses coming to terms with one's own powerlessness.

Lawrence, C. (1999). Media representation of politics and women politicians. *The Australian Rationalist*, 49, 27–32.

In this article, **Dr Carmen Lawrence** shared that in her view, minority, privileged interests were often being served in media presentation of political issues and political players, including women. Dr Lawrence believed that this mattered because the media images of women added to the perception that many already held, that women are outsiders in politics, that they occupied a marginal position. She observed that women were frequently portrayed as exceptions and were simply 'diversions from the serious male game of politics'. To her, it was critical that in an open and representative democracy, that men's privileged occupancy of positions of power and influence were no longer viewed as the norm.



Read:

Book chapter, 12p



Read:

Journal article, 5p



Read:

Journal article, 6p

Lawrence, C. (1994). Women, parliament and public service: Women and political life. *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*, 76, 1–6.

The content of this article is based on the edited text of an address to the Royal Institute of Public Administration Australia (Queensland Division) Conference, titled 'Women in Government', presented by **Dr Carmen Lawrence** in Brisbane on 6 October 1993. In the speech Dr Lawrence noted that in her experience, parliament was not a place where issues were 'expressed and discussed', rather it was a place where people engaged in 'gladiatorial combat'. She recalled that when she first became interested in politics, women were seen as a political liability. She noted that things have changed a little, 'partly because women put their hands up, struggled, pushed, yelled, kicked, screamed and worked extremely hard, not because the political parties made any serious effort to recruit them and put them into parliamentary positions'. Dr Lawrence contends that being elected confers and reflects no particular ability or expertise; and nor should it. In the article she expressed a view that in a representative democracy people from all walks of life, and from all backgrounds should be elected to parliament. She believes that the one thing that is required of parliamentarians is that they be committed to voters' interests.

Hon Helen Morton
MLC and WA's first
female governor
Kerry Sanderson,
AC, CVO, at the
Disability Support
Awards in 2015.
*Photo: Elena
Marcon, 28 March
2015, Westpix/
West Australian
Newspapers Limited,*



Lubcke, I. (2022) *Analysing available research on the experiences and impacts of women elected to the Western Australian Parliament 1983–1989*. Prepared for the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee of the Parliament of Western Australia as part of the 2022 Parliamentary Research Program. Edith Cowan University.

Adding to this unique period in Western Australia's political history, this annotated bibliography analyses all available academia on the experiences and impacts of the women elected in the period 1983 to 1989, namely: **Pamela (Pam) Beggs, Pamela (Pam) Buchanan, Cheryl Davenport, Cheryl Edwardes, Kay Hallahan, Yvonne Henderson, Beryl Jones, Dr Carmen Lawrence, Muriel Patterson, Jacqueline (Jackie) Watkins, Dr Judyth Watson and Dr Hilda Turnbull.**

It provides a useful guide to the materials available on the topic and highlights gaps in the literature.



Read:

Report, 37p

Available in the
Parliamentary
Library.



Jackie Watkins and Pam Beggs toast to their success after their election win, 20 Feb 1983. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134594.



Listen:

Sound recording
(10 sound
cassettes,
9 hr. 50 min)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b1760959_1

McAleer, M. (1993). *Oral history interview with Hon Margaret McAleer*. Interviewer: Erica Harvey. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH2581/8). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

Margaret McAleer talked of her early life and influences and discussed in detail her political career. During the interview she reflected on campaigning matters; her work in Parliament and on parliamentary committees; the role of Whip; political issues and politicians. She also reflected on the role of women in parliament as she was the first non-Labor woman member of the Legislative Council.



Transcript:

Typescript, 164p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b1760959_20

McCann, J., & Wilson, J. (2014). *Representation of women in Australian Parliaments*. Parliamentary Library Research Papers 2014–15. Parliament of Australia. Department of Parliamentary Services

This parliamentary briefing paper contains a useful statistical snapshot of the representation of women in Australian parliaments at the time of publication. It discusses trends and issues relating to women in Australian parliaments within an international context. It includes data on women in leadership and ministry positions, on committees and as candidates in Commonwealth elections. Whilst the focus is on the Commonwealth Parliament, the paper includes comparative information about women in state and territory parliaments, including Western Australia. The issue of gender diversity is discussed within the broader context of women in leadership and executive decision-making roles in Australia including local government, government boards and in the corporate sector. This paper includes discussion of some of the structural, social and cultural factors influencing women's representation including the type of electoral system, the culture of political parties, and the nature of politics and the parliamentary environment in Australia.



Read:

Online resource,
49p

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/WomanAustParl



Read:

Self-published
book, 728p

McSweeney, R. (2015). *Albert Edmund Cockram: King of the racecourse 1870–1943.*

An historical, year-by-year account of the life of Albert Edmund Cockram, written by his great-great-granddaughter Robyn McSweeney. 'AEC' forged the foundations of Western Australia's thoroughbred racehorse industry, owned Belmont and Goodwood racecourses, and pursued entrepreneurial interests in mining as the owner of Griffin Coal. His interests, lifetime of achievements and family connections to some of Western Australia's first families are detailed in the book. Many of the stories are interspersed with McSweeney's reflections as a member of the Legislative Council. It contains a number of black and white photographs dating back to the early 1900s.



Committee visit to Waroona. (Left to right): MLCs Louise Pratt, Jim Scott, Dr Chrissy Sharp, Robyn McSweeney and Bruce Donaldson 2001. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134590.

MacKinney, L. (2009). Turnbull, Dr Hilda Margaret (1942–). *The Australian Women’s Register* (1937–1992).

The Australian Women’s Register is a useful free online resource. An initiative of the Australian Women’s Archives Program (AWAP), it was established in 1999 as a collaboration between the University of Melbourne and the National Foundation for Australian Women. It was created to build knowledge and recognition of the social, cultural, historical and economic contribution made by Australian women to public and private life. Each entry contains biographical information, but the level of detail varies for each individual. For instance, this entry for **Dr Hilda Turnbull** contains a summary of her early life and her career, noting that she was the first woman to represent the National (Country) Party in the Legislative Assembly. Her entry also includes a list of published resources about her. The Register is also contains entries for **Dianne Airey, Pamela (Pam) Buchanan, Carolyn Burton, Florence Cardell-Oliver, Edith Cowan, June Craig, Cheryl Davenport, Mia Davies, Kate Doust, Wendy Duncan, Shelley Eaton, Sue Ellery, Dr Judy Edwards, Cheryl Edwardes, Lyla Elliott, Valma Ferguson, Donna Faragher, Adele Farina, Kay Hallahan, Alyssa Hayden, Yvonne Henderson, May Holman, Judy Hughes, Ruby Hutchison, Dr Carmen Lawrence, Margaret McAleer, Robyn McSweeney, Alannah MacTiernan, Carol Martin, Dee Margetts, Winifred Piesse, Louise Pratt, Jaye Radisich, Michelle Roberts, Barbara Scott, June van de Klashorst, Grace Vaughan, Diana Warnock, Jackie Watkins, Giz Watson, Dr Judyth Watson and Alison Xamon.**



Read:

Online resource

<https://www.womenaustralia.info/entries/turnbull-dr-hilda-margaret/>



Read:

Book chapter, 31p

Macphail, I. (2012). Beyond the ambitions of Chartism: The attainment of women’s suffrage in Western Australia. In Black, D., & Phillips, H. C. J., *Making a difference: A frontier of firsts: Women in the Western Australian Parliament 1921–2012*. Parliament of Western Australia, 1–31.

In a welcome addition to historiography, this chapter contains a detailed account of the attainment of women’s suffrage in Western Australia. It explains that the reform was a product of its time and was influenced by partisan advantage. Also notes that female citizens in Western Australia secured the parliamentary franchise without imprisonment, without forcible feeding, and at the age of 21—a full generation before women in Britain. The chapter is heavily referenced and extensive footnoting is used throughout.



Landsdale MLA,
Margaret Quirk
outside Parliament
House holding
Voluntary Assisted
Dying legislation, to
which she proposed
amendments.

Photo: Westpix/
West Australian
Newspapers Limited
WAN-0044280

Maddison, S. (2010). White parliament, black politics: The dilemmas of Indigenous parliamentary representation, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 45(4), 663–80.

This article examines the complexities involved in Indigenous parliamentary representation. It draws on original interviews with current and past parliamentarians to examine tensions between party identification and indigeneity; between electoral and group-based representation; and between notions of a politics of presence versus the effective representation of a diversity of Indigenous interests. The paper concludes that while parliamentary representation is important in a symbolic sense, without structural transformation it may be an inadequate vehicle for representing Indigenous needs and concerns in the postcolonial state.

Carol Martin is quoted in this well referenced article.



Read:

Journal article, 7p

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10361146.2010.517180>



Kimberley MLA, Josie Farrer on the steps of Parliament House with members of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council, 2019. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0100248.



Read:

Online resource

<https://www.mamamia.com.au/amber-jade-sanderson-maternity-leave/>

Mamamia. (2015). The Australian politician who was forced to resign because she was pregnant. Yes, really. Mamamia, 24 August 2015.

In the absence of academic research on this matter, this blog-post provides an overview of the disappointment and frustration felt by expectant mother **Amber-Jade Sanderson** as she contemplated taking leave to have a baby. The article explains how the standing orders in place at that time did not easily allow for a Legislative Council committee member to be replaced part-way through a parliamentary inquiry. While there was some early agreement on making changes to the rules to allow for her circumstances, ultimately agreement could not be reached. Instead, Sanderson had to resign from her committee positions. In her view, this was an unsatisfactory outcome, and it appeared to her that it discriminated against pregnant women in a way that would likely be unheard of in contemporary Australian workplaces. In arguing her case, she made the point that in the broader community, any requirement for a pregnant woman to resign from a position was not only deeply offensive, but also illegal. She also noted that other parliaments had been more progressive and emphasised that the Legislative Council was a laggard in this respect and had fallen short of community expectations.

Manning, P. (2019). *Inside the Greens: The origins and future of the party, the people and the politics.* Black Inc.

Journalist and author, Paddy Manning delves into the internal machinations of the Greens party from its beginnings as a movements-based volunteer organisation to a political force in the Australian political landscape. The book weaves in quotes from MLCs **Giz Watson, Dr Chrissy Sharp, Dee Margetts** and **Alison Xamon** reflecting on a time when the Greens WA held the balance of power in the Legislative Council. Also includes references to malapportionment and the passage of the one vote one value law reforms, the impact this had on those involved, the election of **Adele Carles** to the seat of Fremantle (the first member of the Greens' to do so).



Read:

Book, 540p



Listen:

Sound recording
(1 audiocassette,
1 hr. 2 min, 4 sec.)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b4027432_2



Transcript:

Typescript, 10p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b4027432_4

Carol Martin, member for Kimberley makes history as the first Aboriginal woman elected to serve in any Australian Parliament. Photo: *Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited WA-0134531*.

Martin, C. (2002). *Oral history interview with Carol Martin*. Interviewer: Shirley Daffen. (OH4098). State Library of Western Australia. *Writing Women into Australian History oral history project*.

This interview with **Carol Martin** formed a part of the 'Writing Women into Australian History' oral history project. It discusses her early family life and education in Perth and then regional country areas (Mukinbudin, Geraldton and Broome) including experiences in foster care; employment with the Department of Community Welfare, Kimberley Land Council, Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation; and studying social work at Curtin University. It also covers her election in 2001 to the Legislative Assembly as the member for the Kimberley when she became the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to any Australian Parliament. She discusses pre-selection, campaigning, her experiences as a member of Parliament and issues related to her electorate.



Offen, R. (2021). *A place to grow: A century of discovery 1921–2021. St Mary’s Anglican Girls School.*

A coffee table book, written by historian and author, Richard Offen to mark the centenary of St Mary’s Anglican Girls’ School. The school was founded on 14 September 1921 when Miss Gouly’s Girls’ Grammar School and Miss Hilfirty’s Alexandra High School merged. The book is filled with images and tales about the school through the years. Originally, the school was located at 40 Colin St, West Perth—in **Edith Cowan’s** electorate where she had been elected to the Legislative Assembly some six months prior. Further, Edith Cowan was the inaugural member of the Board of Governors of the Church of England Girls’ School, St Mary’s West Perth. The book recounts that Cowan offered a prize of 10s 6d for the best motto submitted by students at the merging schools and it was awarded to ten year-old, Isabel Greig for her suggestion: *Fideliter*.



Read:

Book, 333p



Read:

Online resource

<https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/vaughan-grace-sydney-15899>

Oliver, B. (2012). *Vaughan, Grace Sydney (1922–1984)*, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. National Centre of Biography, Australian National University.

In this detailed entry, Bobbie Oliver captures the spirit of **Grace Vaughan** who was known to her parliamentary colleagues as 'Amazing Grace'. Elected in 1974 to the Legislative Council as a member for the South-East Metropolitan Province, she represented the Australian Labor Party. Her election and that of a Liberal, **Margaret McAleer**, brought the number of women in the upper house to three. The article describes her early life and background, touching on her personal experience of poverty. According to Oliver she drew on this experience in the Legislative Council to show how policy decisions of conservative governments adversely affected the lives of working men and women. As Oliver notes, she was especially concerned about unemployment, and was a powerful advocate of job creation and of government policies to lessen the burden on low-income earners. A social worker, she actively promoted social work as a profession. Vaughan is described as a civil libertarian and in 1977, she successfully steered a bill to decriminalise homosexuality through the Legislative Council, only to have it defeated in the Legislative Assembly. She also championed electoral reform: she strongly opposed a bill to disenfranchise illiterate Indigenous Australians and criticised the 'monstrous inequality' between the rural and urban voters of Western Australia. Vaughan also mounted a campaign for the construction of a women's toilet off the main corridor of Parliament House that met with strong opposition. Oliver states that she followed through with a threat to use the men's toilet and it was not long until a 'new well-located female toilet' was installed.

**Parliament of Western Australia. (2022).
*Biographical register of members of the
Parliament of Western Australia.***

An online database containing short biographical information of all members of the Parliament of Western Australia from 1890. It covers all past and present female members.

Parliament of Western Australia. *Women in Parliament.*

The official website of the Parliament of Western Australia contains a number of webpages dedicated to women parliamentarians. For instance, the page on 'female firsts' details achievements specific to the Western Australian context. Designed for a general audience, the webpage contains images of current and former female members and provides details of the portfolios and ministries held by them. It also features a timeline covering the period 1921 to 2021 of important events and 'firsts' involving women in the WA Parliament. The section for 2021 gives a detailed overview of the contemporary landscape of women in the Parliament at that time—the year that it celebrated the centenary of **Edith Cowan's** election.



Read:

Online resource

<https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/parliament/memblast.nsf/WAllMembers>



Read:

Online resource

<https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/WebCMS/webcms.nsf/content/women-in-parliament>

Hon Sue Ellery (ALP) became the woman with the longest period of continuous service in the Legislative Council after the new term began on 22 May 2021. *Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0082902.*



Read:

Book, 435p

Parliament of Western Australia. (2021) *The Western Australian parliamentary handbook* (25th ed.). Parliament of Western Australia.

The volume covers four parts of the WA Parliament's history: forty-first Parliament (from 2021); the record of the Parliament from the granting of responsible government in 1890; from when the Parliament consisted of only the Legislative Council (1832 to 1890); and a section on elections and referenda. Correct as at 1 July 2021, this comprehensive guide contains short biographical information on all members elected to serve the forty-first Parliament, including: **Klara Andric, Lisa Baker, Hannah Beazley, Sandra Carr, Robyn Clarke, Alanna Clohesy, Caitlin Collins, Divina D'Anna, Lara Dalton, Mia Davies, Catherine (Kate) Doust, Suzanne (Sue) Ellery, Donna Faragher, Kim Giddens, Emily Hamilton, Meredith Hammat, Jodie Hanns, Lorna Harper, Jackie Jarvis, Jane Kelsbie, Ali Kent, Alannah MacTiernan, Simone McGurk, Ayor Makur Chuot, Elizabeth (Libby) Mettam, Sophia Moermond, Lisa Munday, Lisa O'Malley, Shelley Payne, Margaret Quirk, Michelle Roberts, Cassandra (Cassie) Rowe, Samantha Rowe, Rita Saffioti, Rosetta (Rosie) Sahanna, Amber-Jade Sanderson, Jessica Shaw, Rebecca Stephens, Jessica Stojkovski, Dr Katrina Stratton, Dr Sally Talbot, Christine Tonkin and Sabine Winton.**



Read:

Book, 269p

Pendal, P., & Black, D. (2004). *House to house: The story of Western Australia's Government and Parliament House over 175 years*. Parliament of Western Australia.

A detailed treatise of the history of parliament's built environment. In detailing the history of the building and its architecture the book draws attention to the dominant features of Parliament House and the lack of facilities for women.

**Pendal, P., Black, D., & Phillips, H. (2007).
*Parliament: Mirror of the people? Members of
the Parliament of Western Australia 1890–2007.*
Parliament of Western Australia.**

Written by three Parliamentary Fellows – Phillip Pendal, David Black and Dr Harry Phillips, this book brings together their observations, research and draws on their unrivalled depth of knowledge of Western Australia’s parliamentary system from a historical, political science and practical perspective. The book examines the breadth of its membership over the years and provides an assessment of the people involved, their backgrounds, their interests, their eccentricities and their personalities. Each chapter covers a range of issues pertinent to parliamentary representation including chapter 9, ‘Women: Towards a gender balance’ (pp. 135–59) which is dedicated to women specifically.



Read:

Book, 300p



Local member, Pamela Beggs at the opening of Hillarys Boat Harbour, 15 Jan 1988. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134596.



Read:

Thesis, 129p

https://api.research-repository.uwa.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/48597138/Pepperday_Mike_2002_compressed.pdf

Pepperday, M. (2002). Improving democracy through elite power struggle: The introduction of proportional representation in the Western Australian Legislative Council. Thesis (M.A.)—University of Western Australia, 2002.

In this thesis Mike Pepperday argues that in 1987 the Labor and National parties were able to take the power to control the Legislative Council away from the Liberals, but that neither party was able to take this power for itself. Instead, most this power was given to new parties and to the people. Pepperday explains that the actions and events to bring this about followed the democratisation process whereby a necessary process of inconclusive struggle by the elite is reluctantly resolved by a compromise giving power to the people. Intertwined with this are the parliamentary contributions of **Ruby Hutchison** who is quoted several times.

Phillips, H. C. J. (2015). Politics in parliament: Is it overrated? *Australasian Parliamentary Review*, 30(1), 164–70.

Notes from a keen observer of the Australian Study of Parliament Group (WA) seminar held at the WA Parliament on 18 September 2014, Dr Harry Phillips provides an overview of contributions from panellists, journalist Peter Kennedy, Hon Barry House MLC and Hon **Michelle Roberts** MLA. Drawing on her considerable experience as a parliamentarian since 1994, Roberts shared her observations on the rise of cynicism within the electorate, the importance of civics education, the significant work done by parliamentary committees and the role of the media. Despite its apparent shortcomings, she also advocated for parliamentary democracy as the best political system for managing the inherent conflicts within a society.



Read:

Online resource, 6p

https://www.aspg.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/APR-2015-06-WINTER_FA_web.pdf



Dr Carmen Lawrence and Hon Michelle Roberts, 1994. Photo: Frances Andrijich.



Read:

Online
resource, 56p
[https://libstream.
parliament.wa.gov.au
/e-docs/8589698999
.pdf](https://libstream.parliament.wa.gov.au/e-docs/8589698999.pdf)

Phillips, H. C. J. (2009). Perspectives on the sporting links of the members of the Parliament of Western Australia: 1890–2009.

This article is a more detailed version of a chapter contained in a 2007 publication *Parliament: Mirror of the People? Members of the Parliament of Western Australia 1890–2007*. The book, which was a Parliamentary History Advisory Committee project, was authored by Phillip Pental, David Black and Dr Harry Phillips. This article mentions the sporting links of **June Craig, Rhonda Parker** and **Barbara Scott** (tennis), **Megan Anwyl** (water polo), **Florence Cardell-Oliver** (hockey), **Janine Freeman** (netball) and **Lisa Baker** (dressage). It also discusses the parliamentary sports club at WA Parliament and the patronships of sporting clubs held by women members.

At a committee hearing of the Select Committee into Child Development Services. (Left to right): Hon Donna Faragher (Deputy Chair), Hon Dr Sally Talbot (Chair) and Hon Samantha Rowe.
*Photo: Westpix/
West Australian
Newspapers Limited
WAN-0043766.*



Phillips, H. C. J., & Corbett, N. (2023). *Parliamentary committees in Western Australia*. Parliament of Western Australia. Volume 2: 2001–2021

A comprehensive guide to the membership and activities of the parliamentary committees active in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia over the last two decades. The final chapter provides first-hand accounts from members reflecting on their committee experiences, including contributions by **Katie Hodson-Thomas, Helen Hodgson, Liz Behjat, Giz Watson** and **Adele Farina**. The appendices contain a useful listing of the committee reports tabled during this time.



Read:

E-book, 972p

[https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/WebCMS/webcms.nsf/resources/file-committees-vol2-whole-book/\\$file/V2Complete eBookFINAL.pdf](https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/WebCMS/webcms.nsf/resources/file-committees-vol2-whole-book/$file/V2Complete eBookFINAL.pdf)



Hon Donna Faragher, Deputy Chair of the Select Committee into Child Development Services with a copy of the committee's report. *Photo: Supplied, Donna Faragher.*



Read:

Book, 328p

Phillips, H. C. J., Black, D., Bott, B., & Fischer, T. (1998). *Representing the people: Parliamentary government in Western Australia*. Fremantle Arts Centre Press.

The decision to write this book stemmed from the activity and interest in parliamentary government, constitutional democracy and political reform in Western Australia in the wake of a royal commission into the commercial activities of government. What followed were recommendations and a renewed interest the State's political institutions and practices and increased efforts to obtain a greater understanding of political processes and under representation. In the book, two chapters deal with the WA Parliament, and chapter 11 dealing specifically with the subject of women in the Parliament. The chapter begins with a brief introduction to the subject, noting that in 1998, only 20 out of 91 members of the WA Parliament were female. It traces the historical development of women parliamentarians, including women's suffrage, obtaining the right to be elected, the right to sit, the systemic under-representation of women in the Parliament and the barriers to female representation.

Representing adjoining electorates within the City of Joondalup: (Left to right) Emily Hamilton (Joondalup MLA), Caitlin Collins (Hillarys MLA) and Jessica Stojkovski (Kingsley MLA).
Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited WAN-0038048.



Phillips, H. C. J. (2012). *Proportional representation in Western Australia: Its principles, history, outcomes and education*. Western Australian Electoral Commission.

Dr Harry Phillips traces the history of proportional representation (PR) in Western Australia. **Edith Cowan** first called for the introduction of PR in the 1920s. In describing its principles, history, outcomes and education, we learn that PR has important consequence in terms of representation. For instance, it facilitates the election of women and creates conditions for more effective performance, in so far as it is associated with consensual bargaining and consensus seeking rather than a gladiatorial political culture. It also facilitates the presence of micro parties, which tend to be feminised in terms of membership, electoral support, leadership and policy orientations.



Read:

Book, 129p



Read:

Biography, 206p

<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6821/>

Phillips, H. C. J. (1996). *The voice of Edith Cowan: Australia's first woman parliamentarian 1921–1924*. Edith Cowan University.

Published as part of the seventy-fifth anniversary of **Edith Cowan's** election to the Legislative Assembly, this book focuses on her role as a parliamentarian. In an introductory essay, Dr Harry Phillips provides an overview of Cowan's parliamentary contributions. This includes summaries of her annual Address-in-Reply speeches and the private member's bills that she introduced into the Legislative Assembly, namely the *Administration Act Amendment Bill* and *Women's Legal Status Bill*. Cowan's participation in a range of other parliamentary proceedings, organised in subject alphabetical order, is also included: parliamentary questions, notices of motion, complimentary remarks and statements about the annual budget estimates. Useful membership lists of organisations and advisory bodies that she was associated with, her election pamphlets, and Cowan's electoral record for the seat of West Perth were also included. Published in a time before online access to *Hansard*, a major objective of the publication had been a desire to make Edith Cowan's parliamentary speeches more accessible to the public than would otherwise have been the case.

Phillips, H. C. J. (2013). *Electoral law in the State of Western Australia: An overview (3rd ed.)*. Western Australian Electoral Commission.

This third revision of the original 2008 publication was prepared following the State General Election on 9 March 2013. It provides a concise historical overview of the electoral law applicable in Western Australia from the time it became a State of the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1901. Western Australia entered statehood without universal suffrage and without women having the legal right to be a member of Parliament. Chapter 2, 'The Franchise' includes a detailed explanation of women's rights to vote in elections and to sit in Parliament. Throughout the book reference is made to the contributions by women, parliamentarians such as **Edith Cowan's** celebrated calls for proportional representation and compulsory voting.



Read:

E-book, 197p

https://www.elections.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/documents/Electoral_Law_WA_3rd.pdf



Listen:

Sound recording
(9 sound cassettes)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b1850954_1



Transcript:

Typescript, 145p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b1850954_18

Winifred (Win) Piesse was the first woman elected to the Parliament of Western Australia to represent the National Country Party, for a term commencing 22 May 1977. *Photo: State Library of Western Australia, 361743PD.*

Piesse, W. (1997). *Oral history interview with Winifred Piesse*. Interviewer: Gail O'Hanlon. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH2918). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

In conversation with historian Gail O'Hanlon, **Winifred (Win) Piesse** recalls her early life, background, and her pathway to parliament from local government in rural Western Australia in the late 1970s. Contesting the Lower Central province seat in the Legislative Council in 1977, she held the seat until defeated in the 1983 election. Piesse was the first woman elected to the Parliament of Western Australia to represent the Country Party. Piesse talks of her involvement in state politics, comments on the role of women in politics at local and state level. The interviews were recorded between November 1996 and October 1997, some twenty years after her parliamentary service.



Popham, D. (Ed.) (1979). *Reflections: Profiles of 150 women who helped make Western Australia's history*. Carrolls.

As part of a project by the Women's Committee for the 150th Anniversary Celebrations of Western Australia, 150 women were profiled. This includes entries for both **Edith Cowan** and **Florence Cardell-Oliver**. Each entry provides a generalist biographical overview of their lives and parliamentary careers.



Read:

Book, 266p



Listen:

Sound recordings
(2 video files: 1 hr.,
14 min., 33 sec.

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b6912028_1



Transcript:

Sound, colour +
online transcript
(PDF, 31p), and
2 audio files (mp3):
1 hr., 14 min.,
40 sec.)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b6912028_3

(Left to right):
Hon Louise Pratt
MLC and Dr Janet
Woollard MLA
outside Parliament
House, 2003. *Photo:*
*Ross Swanborough/
Newspix NPX312258.*

Pratt, L. (2022). *Oral history interview with Louise Clare Pratt. Interviewer: Helena Cohen-Robertson. Campaign Against Moral Persecution (CAMP INK). (OH4579/13 2). State Library of Western Australia.*

In a project to capture stories of the history of LGBTQIA+ activism and community awareness in Western Australia to celebrate the fifty years since the Campaign Against Moral Persecution (CAMP INK) was founded, a number of leading figures and contributors who have been involved in LGBTQIA+ activism in Western Australia were interviewed by the State Library. This included **Louise Pratt**, a former member of the Legislative Council, who then went on to represent Western Australia in the Senate. Pratt identifies as queer and a lesbian.

In the interview Pratt comments on the intersection between some of the matters she had been advocating for, such as reproductive technology and her own personal experience. She discusses her childhood and family; her early relationship experiences; her involvement in campus politics and later in the Labor Party; her election to the Legislative Council. Pratt discusses some of the highlights of her career in state politics, such as the Adoption Act, as well as some of the homophobia she faced in Parliament. She talks about the marriage equality plebiscite; her experience of having her son, including fertility treatment; her work in the Shadow Cabinet and plans for further work in government



Reekie, G. (1985). War, sexuality and feminism: Perth women's organisations, 1938–1945. *Australian Historical Studies*, 21(85), 576–91.

Gail Reekie explains how the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia were actively involved in the struggle for women's social, economic or political rights. It is said that they had a profound impact on **Florence Cardell-Oliver**. Reekie observes that the social crisis of WWII and the issue of women's sexual exploitation together created the conditions for a co-operative women's movement more united in its concern with gender than it was divided by class. According to Reekie, this wartime co-operation yielded to more enduring political factionalism in the late 1940s, and a united women's movement slumbered until the revival of feminism several decades later.



Read:

Journal article, 15p

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10314618508595728>



Premier Ross McLarty and his cabinet, 1947. Hon Florence Cardell-Oliver was the first woman to be appointed as a minister and can be seen here in the back row. *Photo: State Library of Western Australia. 069510PD.*



Read:

Book, 265p

Reynolds, M. (1995). *The last bastion: Labor women working towards equality in the parliaments of Australia*. Business & Professional Publishing.

Written by former senator and minister, Margaret Reynolds, this book traces the experiences of Labor women from the birth of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in 1891, examining their role during the formative years to 1995. The book identifies the many women pioneers who fought for the right to vote, for political representation, for human rights and for equality in the workforce. In chapter 2, 'The first elected women (1925–45)', the political careers of **May Holman**, the first Labor woman to be elected to an Australian parliament is explored. **Ruby Hutchison** is featured in chapter 3, 'Fighting entrenched attitudes (1945–70)', and it details her success in overcoming barriers to parliamentary participation. The contributions made by **Lyla Elliott** are featured in chapter 5, 'Women moving forward (1970–82)'. Chapter 7, 'Women in power' highlights **Dr Carmen Lawrence's** success in attaining roles as minister and premier, and the difficulties endured by women in political leadership positions. Also mentioned are the experiences of **Cheryl Davenport**, **Kay Hallahan**, **Yvonne Henderson** and **Pam Beggs**. Appendices contain biographical notes and a photograph of each of the Labor women elected to Parliament—organised by jurisdiction; a chronological listing of Labor women in Australian parliaments; ministerial portfolios held by Labor women; and a timeline of the achievements of Australian women.

Women ministers can now be seen around the Cabinet table. First cabinet meeting of the new Western Australian Labor government, March 2017. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0065422.



Reynolds, M. (1994). *HERstory: Australian Labor women in federal, state and territory Parliaments 1925–1994*.

This book has its origins in a series of newsletters, ‘Some of them Sheilas’ that Margaret Reynolds produced in 1991 to mark the Labor Party’s centenary. Her research led her to the names of 120 Labor women who had served as parliamentary representatives, but in her view, did not share an appropriate place in the official history books. Reynolds felt that these women ought to have been recognised and set about writing this book. References are made to Labor’s ‘first women’, namely: **May Holman** (first Labor woman elected to a state parliament) and **Dr Carmen Lawrence** (first Labor woman to become Premier). Extracts from their inaugural speeches form part of the entries.

In another chapter, personal stories contributed by **Cheryl Davenport** (on getting started, pre-selection and women in the House), **Dr Judy Edwards** (on dress standards for women in parliament) and **Dr Judyth Watson** (on kindness and compassion and an Austcare campaign) are included. The book also contains short paragraph-style entries for **Pam Beggs, Pam Buchanan, Cheryl Davenport, Dr Judy Edwards, Lyla Elliott, Val Ferguson, Kay Hallahan, Yvonne Henderson, May Holman, Ruby Hutchison, Beryl Jones, Dr Carmen Lawrence, Alannah MacTiernan, Michelle Roberts, Grace Vaughan, Diana Warnock, Jackie Watkins** and **Dr Judyth Watson**.

A chronological list of Labor women elected in other jurisdictions is also included.



Read:

Book, self-published,
160p



Read:

Online resource, 9p

https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/8378094/upload_binary/8378094.pdf

Richards, L. (2022). *LGBTIQ+ Parliamentarians in Australian parliaments: A quick guide*. Research papers series, 2021–2022. Parliamentary Library, Department of Parliamentary Services, Parliament of Australia.

A useful snapshot from the Federal Parliamentary Library, this guide provides a summary of information about Australian federal, state and territory parliamentarians who have publicly identified as LGBTIQ+ while in office. For the purposes of the publication 'LGBTIQ+ parliamentarian' refers to a member of Parliament who has publicly identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer or with another minority sexual orientation or gender identity either before or during their time in office. Tables are included that list the relevant names, party, chamber, state/electorate, dates in office, and includes significant firsts. Entries for Western Australia women includes: **Giz Watson, Louise Pratt, Lynn MacLaren, Dr Sally Talbot and Lisa Baker.**



Listen:

Sound recording,
~50 mins

<https://rtrfm.com.au/podcasts/herstory-on-rtrfm/>

RTRFM. (2022-3) *HERSTORY on RTRFM*. Podcast presented by Taylah Strano.

Produced with the assistance of the Community Broadcasting Foundation, HERSTORY on RTRFM is podcast series about some of the remarkable women in the Western Australian Hall of Fame. The podcasts highlight the lives and careers of the women who have 'demolished barriers, lived incredible lives, and built a legacy of possibility for the girls and young women who follow in their footsteps'. Three former members are featured, namely: **Cheryl Davenport** (who talks about law reform, legacies and leadership, broadcast 28 February 2023); **Giz Watson** (who talks about activism, carpentry and caring for the environment, broadcast 2 November 2022); and, **Dr Carmen Lawrence** (who talks about life in public office, environmental activism and netball, broadcast 7 December 2021). Each episode provides an interesting insight into their unique experiences as a woman navigating political life.

Sawer, M. (2013). Misogyny and misrepresentation: Women in Australian parliaments. *Political Science*, 65(1), 105–17.

In this research note, Marian Sawer explored the circumstances that prompted Julia Gillard, Australia's first woman Prime Minister to make a powerful speech on misogyny in the Federal Parliament in 2012. The article examined the kind of misogyny or sexist misrepresentation of women in public life that prompted Gillard's speech. It looked into the feminist mobilisation that took place in response to her treatment and its effect on the way political parties approached gender issues in the run-up to the 2013 federal election campaign. According to Sawer, having a woman in the role brought into the open the institutional and attitudinal resistance to change in, and the gendered nature of, Australian politics. The article includes data about the representation of women in Australian politics and points to a decline.



Read:

Journal article, 12p

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0032318713488316>

Sawer, M., & Radford, G. (2008). *Making women count: A history of the Women's Electoral Lobby in Australia*. University of New South Wales Press.

In the foreword to this book, **Dr Carmen Lawrence** draws on her role in the establishment of the Women's Electoral Lobby (WEL) in Australia. Authors Marian Sawer and Gail Radford trace the history of WEL in Australia. They noted that women were often constrained by the prevailing attitudes and expectations that derided their intellectual capacity and limited their choices. Further, women in Australia grew weary of the barriers to their full participation in the political landscape, or as Dr Lawrence observed in her contribution: 'women were young, educated and impatient with the world of their mothers'.



Read:

Book, 317p



Read:

Journal article, 13p

<https://doi.org/10.1093/parlij/55.1.5>

Sawer, M. (2002). The representation of Women in Australia: Meaning and make-believe. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 55, 5–18.

In this paper, Marian Sawer explores the strategies available for moving the issue of women's representation beyond numbers to accountability for policy, drawing on evidence from Australia and several other countries. She points out that the under-representation of women is an inherently ambiguous slogan with a number of layers of meaning wrapped up in it, encompassing the representation of interests, the representativeness of the legislature and the equal right to act as a representative.

Sawer references **Dr Carmen Lawrence** and her belief that 'justice would be achieved when mediocre women had just as much chance of sitting in parliament as mediocre men' (p. 10). Contains a useful table with the party affiliation of women in Australian parliaments covering the period 1972 to 2000 with the combined data for federal, state and territory parliaments.



Hon Adele Farina and Hon Jacqui Boydell in a meeting of the public administration committee. *Photo: Parliament House collection*

Sawer, M. (Ed). (1996). Challenging politics? Seventy-five years of women's parliamentary representation in Australia. *International Review of Women and Leadership: Special issue, Women and politics, 2*(1)

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the election of the first woman to an Australian parliament, the *International Review of Women and Leadership* commissioned Dr Marian Sawer AO, Associate Professor in Politics at the University of Canberra, to be the guest editor of a special issue dedicated to women and politics. Using the experience of **Edith Cowan** as a prism, Dr Sawer examined parliamentary participation from a woman's perspective. She also explored the continuing dilemmas of women's representation in public life—including concepts of women's interests, equality and difference, separatism versus integration and independence versus partisanship.



Read:

Journal, special issue 117p

<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6825>



Listen:

Sound recording
(15 audio files,
13 hr. 56 min

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b4685276_4



Transcript:

Typescript, 262p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b4685276_9

Scott, B. (2015). *Oral history interview with Barbara Scott*. Interviewer: Anne Yardley. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH4209). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

In conversation with historian Anne Yardley, **Barbara Scott** discusses her childhood in rural Western Australia, her high school years in Perth and her ambitions to become a teacher. She explains that following teachers' college, Scott taught in schools in Western Australia and London before settling in Perth. Dissatisfied, she became active in early childhood education which led to an interest in state politics. Joining the Liberal Party, she contested the 1983 upper house seat for the South Metropolitan region and was successful, recollecting that at that time she was only the third Liberal woman to be elected to the Legislative Council. Her time in the parliament is also discussed, noting that she continued to be a vocal advocate for children and chaired a select committee that examined immunisation and vaccination rates in children.

Scott also spoke of her opposition to amendments to the abortion bill and campaigned to prevent the legalisation of prostitution. Her contribution to, and active service on, parliamentary committees is also topic of discussion. Scott recounts that as chair of the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People, she was instrumental in the appointment of the first Commissioner for Children and Young People in Western Australia. Reflecting on her decision to retire from political life in 2009, Scott continues to have a keen interest in the welfare of children. The interviews took place between September 2014 and August 2015.

Sharp, C. (2022). *Shades of green*. Vivid Publishing.

This posthumous book by **Dr Chrissy Sharp** is a quirky and at times disarmingly personal account of her life. Three interlocking themes are central to the narrative: politics, forests and memoir. The book is a personal account of what she had seen take place in boardrooms and in parliament, in forest protest camps and in logging coupes. It is a story of governance and of historical decisions taken amidst great social tensions and conflicting perspectives and priorities. In 1996, Dr Sharp was elected to a 'hung Parliament', for the Greens (WA) where for the first time the Legislative Council had a non-conservative majority. This meant that her vote carried weight; a responsibility not lost on her. Her experiences of this are described in some detail in a chapter, 'On being in the balance of power'.



Read:

Book, 212p



Dr Chrissy Sharp
pictured in her
Parliament House
office, 3 June 2004.
*Photo: Westpix/
West Australian
Newspapers Limited
TWA-0111463.*



Listen:

Sound recording
(6 x60 sound
cassettes)



Transcript:

Typescript, 125p

Sharp, C. (2006). *Oral history interview with Hon Christine (Chrissy) Sharp*. Interviewer: Ron Chapman. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH3597). State Library of Western Australia & Parliamentary History Advisory Committee Western Australia, Parliament of Western Australia.

In conversation with Ron Chapman, **Dr Christine (Chrissy) Sharp** reflects on her life as an activist within Western Australia's burgeoning forest protest movement. She recounts that in 1989, she was appointed by the Dowding Labor Government to be the first woman member of the Environmental Protection Authority and in 1993, was re-appointed by the Court Liberal Government. A member of the Greens (WA) since the party's foundation in 1990, she was elected as the Greens MLC for the South West region in December 1996. In her first parliamentary term she chaired the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development and, following her re-election in February 2001, chaired the Environment and Public Affairs Standing Committee.

During her time in Parliament Dr Sharp successfully moved amendments to the *School Education Act* to ensure that no child was discriminated against based on learning disabilities or because of social, cultural or geographical circumstances. In 1999, she introduced two cannabis-related bills proposing a cautioning system for recreation users, legalising the medical use of cannabis and a structure for the development of a commercial hemp industry. The interview contains interesting insights into the Greens Party's influence at a time when the minor parties held the balance of power in the Legislative Council. The interview also provides reflections on the internal dynamics taking place within the Greens Party during the controversial one vote-one value debate. The interviews took place in August/September 2006.

Smith, V. (1975). *Women in Australian parliaments and local governments: Past and present: A survey* by A. Viola Smith, LLB. Australian Local Government Women's Association.

Published in 1975 to commemorate the International Women's Year, this book was a welcome addition to documenting the achievements of women elected to public office from the three tiers of government. Prior to this, records were fragmentary and scattered. Described as a literary monument to the women of yesterday, today and tomorrow, the book includes references to the contributions made by **Edith Cowan, May Holman** and **Florence Cardell-Oliver**.



Read:

Book, 148p

Radi, H. (Ed). (1988). *200 Australian women: A Redress anthology*. Women's Redress Press.

Edited by Heather Radi, this book was published in 1988 as a contribution to national history when the nation was commemorating the arrival in 1788 of the First Fleet. The article explains that several historical projects were officially sponsored for the bicentennial year, but the women at Redress anticipated a gap in the coverage and welcomed a proposal for an anthology focused on women—200 women to mark the passage of 200 years. The exclusion of women still living simplified the process of selection. Because of this editorial decision, the anthology is richer in detail for the nineteenth and early twentieth century than for late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Features entries for **Edith Cowan, May Holman** and **Florence Cardell-Oliver**.



Read:

Edited book, 256p



Read:

Book, 233p

Vodesil-Baruffi, J. & Jenner, C. (2013). *Permanent impressions: A salute to contemporary heroines*, Carina Hoang Communications.

This book features portraits of fifty Western Australian women in thoughtful and thought-provoking poses by Perth based artist, Jana Vodesil-Baruffi. The book celebrates the achievements of women who have made a significant contribution to the Western Australian community and the Australian nation at large. Selected for their strength of character and impact on the community, the book includes portraits and profiles of **Dr Carmen Lawrence**, **Carol Martin** and **Cheryl Edwardes**.

Wakeham, A. (2012). Standing her ground: Against the odds. *STM: Sunday Times Magazine*, 1 August 2021, 1–5.

Describing **Mia Davies** as the ‘Nationals’ wunderkid’, this feature article charts the one hundred days since she was sworn in as the Leader of the Opposition. The article covers her early life growing up in the country, her ‘just get on with it’ attitude and her pathway to parliament, and to becoming a minister. It also discusses her family links to WA Parliament, where her father, Dexter Davies was a member of the Legislative Council.

It covers her election to the Legislative Council, her decision to contest a lower house seat of Central Wheatbelt, and her ascension to the leadership of the National Party in 2017, the first women to do so. After the 2021 election, Davies became the party’s first Opposition leader since 1947. The article also discusses the challenges she has faced as a young woman in political life and contains a number of colourful photographs portraying Davies at different times in her life.



Read:

Magazine article, 5p



The member for Central Wheatbelt, Mia Davies contributes to the debate in the Legislative Assembly, with Speaker Roberts presiding. *Photo: Parliament House collection.*



Warnock, D. (2001). *Oral history interview with Diana Warnock. Interviewer: Criena Fitzgerald. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH3129). Parliament of Western Australia.*

Listen:

Sound recording
(6 sound cassettes,
360 minutes)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b2085418_1

This interview provides a glimpse into the life of **Diana Warnock**, a passionate and vibrant woman whose life has been described as ‘consciously political’. Warnock talks about her career as a journalist, her influences, and her sadness at the loss of her supporter and husband, Bill Warnock. Also detailed is her preselection and entry into the Parliament in 1993. She talks at length about her parliamentary career, in particular her work on abortion law reform and her commitment to the republican movement.



Transcript:

Typescript, 116p



Diana Warnock pictured on the front steps of Parliament House with her ‘Humanist of the Year’ award, April 1999. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0135244.

Watson, G. (2022). *Oral history interview with Giz Watson*. Interviewer: David Worth. Greens (WA) 30th anniversary. (OH4366/67).

This interview took place on 23 August 2022, as part of the celebrations for the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Greens (WA). **Giz Watson** was elected to the Legislative Council as the member for North Metropolitan region in 1996 after being a candidate in three previous elections. She served until 2013 when she was defeated while standing as the candidate for the South West region. In 2016, the WA Parliament conducted an extensive interview with Watson and this interview focuses mainly on the period since then. Since her retirement from the parliament, she has been very active with the Global Greens international program in the Asia Pacific Greens Federation. In this interview she discusses her involvement in several Greens (WA) critical events, such as the resignations of Legislative Assembly member **Adele Carles** and Senator Scott Ludlam.



Listen:

Sound recording
(1 audio file, 2 hr.,
1 min., 44 sec.)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b6910769_1



Transcript:

Typescript, 38p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b6910769_2



Listen:

Sound recording
(16 audio files,
19 hours)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b5041689_1



Transcript:

Typescript, 328p

Watson, G. (2016). *Oral history interview with Elizabeth (Giz) Watson*. Interviewer: Anne Yardley. Western Australian Parliamentary History Project. (OH4275). Parliament of Western Australia.

In this interview **Giz Watson** discusses her early family life, migrating from England; schooling and further studies; major influences in her life; interest in politics and political development; Greens (WA) Party; and aspects of her career whilst a member of the Legislative Council. Watson was a particularly active parliamentary committee member and served on a number of standing and select committees and discusses this. Also discussed are her observations about the role of the Legislative Council, the Greens (WA) and the wider environmental and conservation movement. The significant issues that came before parliament during her tenure including, the so called one vote one value legislation is also covered.

Watson, G. (2014). *Oral history interview with Giz Watson*. Interviewer: Dawn Kennedy. Full Circle oral history project. (OH4366/65). University of Western Australia.

This interview with **Giz Watson** was conducted on 19 September 2014 by Dawn Kennedy at UWA Albany Campus for the 'Full Circle' oral history project, a collaboration between the UWA Centre for WA History (CWAH) and the University of Hertfordshire. The project aimed to collect and record the memories of British immigrants to Western Australia and their family members in the UK. Watson discusses the migrating to Australia from England, her sense of identity, both as a British migrant and as a new Australian and the impact of her bi-cultural identity on herself, her family and the next generation of her family. Finally, her views on whether Australia should become a republic in view of modern Australian multicultural society are canvassed.



Listen:

Sound recording
(1 audio file,
27 min., 9 sec.)

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b7120429_1



Transcript:

Typescript, 11p

https://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b7120429_2



Read:

Online resource, 1p

https://www.perthmodern.wa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/PerthModernSchool_News_Jul23.pdf

Watson, J. (2023). *Modernians: Lives well lived*. Dr Judyth Watson, 1940–2023, PMS student 1953–1955. *Perth Modern School News*, July 2023, 35

Dr Judyth Watson was a student at Perth Modern School from 1953. She was a recipient of a Government High School Scholarship to Mod in 1953 and left at age 15 to pursue a career in nursing. In 2017, she was invited to present the Perth Modernian Society Oration entitled 'Unfinished Business'. This article is based on excerpts from the oration and covers her early life, migrating to Western Australia from England, her nurse training at Royal Perth Hospital, further educational pursuits (including a PhD) and her foray into politics as an adviser to the state Labor Government in 1983, where she shared that she had the 'remarkable experience' of translating policy into legislation. Endorsed for the seat of Canning, and elected at the state election in 1986, she explained that much of the work she did in Parliament was with and behalf of women legislating to protect them against gender-based violence.

She highlighted several 'high points to celebrate round women's achievements', including the ordination of women priests in the Anglican Church at St George's Cathedral in 1992. She also highlighted her invitation to an Aboriginal women's meeting in the desert near Lake Gregory where over 700 women transacted secret and sacred business for the first time in decades. Both ceremonies were historic for the women involved and had an impact on Watson. She also mentioned her volunteer work with refugee communities. Finally, she touched on future challenges, namely climate change, Aboriginal reconciliation and the 'unfinished business' for Aboriginal Australians, refugees and women. She implored those present not to 'walk past injustices because that's a sign you condone or accept them.' (p. 35).

Watson, J. (2009). Women and political representation. In Gregory, J., & Gothard, J. (Eds). *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, UWA Press, 936–8.

Former member of the Legislative Assembly, **Dr Judyth Watson** provides an overview of women's political representation in Western Australia. The author's account is succinct, factual and apolitical. It celebrates the extraordinary number of 'firsts' for Australia by women in the WA Parliament, namely **Edith Cowan, May Holman, Florence Cardell-Oliver, Ruby Hutchison** and **Dr Carmen Lawrence**. The observation that parliaments are not representative of the composition of the community in terms of gender or ethnicity is noted. The influence of political parties and their role in addressing this is also mentioned. The entry also suggests further reading both within the encyclopedia itself and external sources.



Read:

Book extract, 2p



Premier Dr Carmen Lawrence and Dr Judyth Watson at a press conference regarding deaths in custody, 9 May 1991. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0131681.



Read:

Book, 209p

Watson, J. (Ed.). (1994). *We hold up half the sky: The voices of Western Australian ALP women in Parliament*. Australian Labor Party WA.

Edited by **Dr Judyth Watson**, this book is a useful compilation focusing on the women elected to parliament representing the Labor Party to 1994. The book contains excerpts of key speeches from twenty-one of the twenty-two women elected to State and Federal Parliament, demonstrating the depth and breadth of their interests and work as captured in their contributions to parliamentary debates and recorded in *Hansard* for posterity. Watson selected the speeches and observed that they were typically delivered in a masculine environment and culture, and that the interjections recorded were not generally affirming and, on the whole, served only to 'demean and to trivialise'. The book also included an introductory chapter detailing several 'female firsts' by pioneering Labor women in Western Australia. Western Australian women included are **Pamela Beggs, Pamela Buchanan, Cheryl Davenport, Dr Judy Edwards, Lyla Elliott, Val Ferguson, Kay Hallahan, Yvonne Henderson, May Holman, Ruby Hutchison, Beryl Jones, Dr Carmen Lawrence, Alannah MacTiernan, Grace Vaughan, Diana Warnock, Jackie Watkins** and **Dr Judyth Watson**. Most entries were accompanied by a discrete biography or a personal reflection and a photograph.

Leader of the Opposition, Jim McGinty introduces the women members of the shadow cabinet. (Left to right) Dr Judyth Watson, Alannah MacTiernan, Dr Judy Edwards, Yvonne Henderson, Kay Hallahan and Michelle Roberts.
Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited TWA-0134586.



Watson, T. (2021). Interview with Dr Carmen Lawrence and Hon Simone McGurk MLA. YMCA WA Youth Parliament.

The year 2020 marked the centenary of the passing of the *Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act 1920* which enabled women to run for Parliament in Western Australia. In honour of the milestone, and on International Women's Day, YMCA Program Coordinator Taylor Watson interviewed **Dr Carmen Lawrence**, Australia's first female Premier, and the Minister for Women's Interests, **Hon Simone McGurk** about how life had changed for women in politics. The interview took place in the Parliament House, including on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Issues discussed include the 24/7 news cycle, social media, the barriers to entry by women and generational equality.



Watch:

Video 1.33 mins

<https://fb.watch/q1UF5OHbAu/>



Read:

Book, 51p

Weightman, L., Ward, D., Ware, G., O'Callaghan, T., O'Connor, H., & Angelin, K. (1995). *Pam Buchanan: Her story*. L. Weightman.

This biography is a tribute to the work of **Pamela (Pam) Buchanan**, a representative of the people of the North, and her advocacy for the Pilbara. Most of the authors were long term residents of the Pilbara and had had dealings with Buchanan, noting that she was a much-respected woman and was well remembered for her unwavering support of her constituents. Buchanan played a key role in the development of the infrastructure enjoyed by those who live in the Pilbara today. The book covers her 'political apprenticeship' as an electorate officer in Karratha for Peter Dowding, her endorsement for a 'safe Liberal seat' in 'man's country' and her election. When elected in 1983 as the member for Pilbara, she polled 60.5 per cent of the vote. Re-elected in 1986 as the member for Ashburton, she was the first woman to be elected to the position of Government Whip. The book also details her appointment to the Lawrence cabinet in 1986 and her subsequent dismissal during a cabinet reshuffle. It also covers the turbulent times in the Parliament during this period, her resignation from the Labor Party, her parliamentary career as an independent member of the Legislative Assembly and her illness.

Pam Buchanan with Peter Dowding and others at Bindi Bindi, 19 January 1986.
Photo: Westpix/
West Australian Newspapers Limited
TWA-0134592.



West TV (Channel 44). (2017). *The Key to Your House*.

This 13-part television series was produced in 2017 by the Parliament of Western Australia in partnership with West TV (Channel 44). The series aimed to promote the Parliament and its rich history. While women feature throughout the series, episode 8, 'Women in Parliament' focusses exclusively on the women who have served in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly since 1921. Episode 6, 'A day in the life of a member of Parliament' examines a typical day in the life of members and explores the different challenges they face. **Mia Davies** and **Donna Faragher** are interviewed and explain the challenges of balancing constituency work and parliamentary sittings. Juggling family responsibilities while being an elected representative is a theme discussed by **Liza Harvey**, **Michelle Roberts** and **Kate Doust**, while **Amber-Jade Sanderson** explains the job satisfaction she gets from attending community events and meeting her constituents.



Watch:

Video, 13 episodes,
~15 mins per
episode

https://youtu.be/j_cFJv2fQvg



Constituency
work: Liberals
Libby Mettam and
Liza Harvey on a
visit to Busselton
in the Vasse
electorate. *Photo:
Supplied, Busselton
Dunsborough Mail.*

Other relevant content appears in episode 7, 'Parliamentary firsts'. This features information on a number of formidable women including, **Edith Cowan**, **May Holman**, and **Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver**. It also contains a short interview with **Dr Carmen Lawrence** about her experience as a woman in parliament, her public persona and the lack of privacy. She also comments on the prevalence of 'frank sexism', 'benevolent sexism' and 'rank misogyny' in politics. **Carol Martin** is also interviewed and describes herself as a 'strange mix'—a 'screaming feminist and an Aboriginal woman'. She shares that it was a humbling experience to learn from her teenage son that she was the first Aboriginal woman elected to any Australian parliament. This episode also features **Giz Watson**, the first openly-lesbian member of Parliament in Australia. Also worth watching is episode 13, 'The journey to serve', which explores a member's journey to politics; the toll politics can take on a member and their family; misconceptions of parliament and how these can be overcome; and what representation means for various members of Parliament.



President Clohesy with Hon Ayor Makur-Chout and baby Achol in the Legislative Council, 2023. Photo: Parliament House collection.

**Western Australia, Legislative Council. (2021).
*An interview with the President of the Legislative
Council, Hon Alanna Clohesy. Interviewed by
Michael Loney.***

When Hon **Alanna Clohesy**, President of the Legislative Council in the forty-first Parliament made her opening statement the decorum differed to the experience of the first woman elected to serve in the WA Parliament. In 1921, **Edith Cowan** was booed, heckled and ridiculed—principally for being a woman. In this one-on-one interview with Michael Loney, President Clohesy reflects on the inclusion of women in the parliament noting that it seems to have flowed in three waves: **Edith Cowan** and **May Holman** being the first wave in the 1920s, then again in the 1980s where a significant number of women were elected, and again from 2017. The 2021 election also saw another significant wave of women elected.

Alanna Clohesy shares that from an early age she was motivated to advocate for things that she saw as being unfair or unjust for people in the community and has learnt how to harness that to achieve change. At first, she believed that political participation was not something she would pursue, but she was encouraged to put her hand up to represent the community in the Parliament. In her role as President, she aspires to be fair and hard working. She shares that during her term she hopes to affect the modernisation of the Legislative Council—and the Parliament as a whole—by making sure it is more inclusive. One of the early changes she made was changing the rules that prevented ‘strangers’ on the floor of the Parliament so that parents who have the immediate care of their children can come onto the chamber floor. This enables them to simultaneously be parents and parliamentarians. Clohesy makes the point that, while Edith Cowan would be delighted to see progress in women’s political representation in the WA Parliament, she may have been exasperated at the length of time that it had taken.



Watch:

Video, 6.52 mins

https://youtu.be/K_anQf4gbUc



**Western Australia, Legislative Assembly. (2021).
*An interview with the Speaker of the Legislative
Assembly, Hon Michelle Roberts. Interviewed by
Michael Loney.***

Watch:

Video, 5.47 mins

[https://youtu.be/
TMit7-HE5hk](https://youtu.be/TMit7-HE5hk)

In conversation with Michael Loney, **Hon Michelle Roberts** reflects on the immense significance of her election as the first woman to hold the high office of Speaker in the Legislative Assembly, and in the centenary year of the election of **Edith Cowan**. Roberts was also the first woman to be a police minister in Australia and currently holds the record as the longest serving member of the WA Parliament. She says that it is incredibly significant that both current presiding officers are women in the forty-first Parliament and believes that Edith Cowan would have been both delighted and shocked that women now occupy several senior leadership positions in the WA Parliament. Roberts speaks of her experience in combining her role as a parent to young children while also being an elected representative and references those who came before her, namely **Dr Judy Edwards** and **Yvonne Henderson**. She mentions that one of her earliest decisions as Speaker was to make a declaration that if any member chose to breastfeed, they could do so in the chamber. Roberts discusses the goals that she would like to achieve as the first woman Speaker and talks about the honour she feels at being the first woman to preside over the House—something that would have been unthought of a hundred years ago.



Hon Michelle Roberts is the first female to be elected as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. *Photo: WA Business News.*

Western Australia. Metropolitan Cemeteries Board. (2024). Karrakatta Cemetery historical walk trail: Walking with Western Australian women.

A companion guide to Historical Walk Trail 1: 'Statesmen and scholars' and Walk Trail 2: 'Heroes and humanitarians and other West Australian history-makers', this guide provides a map to help locate the graves, along with profiles of the people featured along the trail. For each individual a photograph and a short overview of their life and death is included. Each gravesite is identified with a grave number and a heritage trail symbol. It includes entries for **Ruby Hutchison, May Holman, Edith Cowan** and **Grace Vaughan**.



Read:

Online resource

<https://www.mcb.wa.gov.au/our-cemeteries/karrakatta-cemetery/karrakatta-historical-walk-trails/karrakatta-walk-trail-three-points-of-interest/>



Thousands of people lined the streets to pay their respects to May Holman when she died on 20 March 1939, three days after a car accident on the eve of the 1939 election. *Photo: State Library of Western Australia. 226509PD*



Read:

Journal article, 7p

White, K. (1981). May Holman: Australian Labor's pioneer woman parliamentarian. *Labour History*, 41(1), 110–17.

According to Kate White, **May Holman** is remembered as the embodiment of the local member who represented their constituents well, rather than as 'a great fighter for women'. Unlike Edith Cowan, Holman did not enter Parliament on the woman's vote or with support from local women's organisations. Rather, she won Labor preselection from eleven candidates and was elected unopposed for the safe Labor seat of Forrest, with the backing of the Timber Workers' Union (TWU). As the article explains, not only was Holman the first Labor woman elected to the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia, but she was also the first Australian woman to be both a trade union official and a parliamentarian, and the first to become 'an experienced parliamentarian'. She won six successive elections and became one of two women (the other was Lady Astor) to have a seat in an English-speaking Parliament for more than a decade.

The article traces Holman's formative years, her relationship with her father (who was also a MLA), her work with the TWU, her preselection and election to Parliament. Her parliamentary career is also covered, noting that despite the strong feminist movement in Perth in the 1920s, Holman did not champion the feminist cause in Parliament. Drawing on her strong union background the author explains that she saw herself as 'a servant of the Labor movement and only in her later career spoke on the need for equal pay and opportunity for both sexes'. Her association with, and work for, the Labor Women's Organisation and the Women's Service Guilds is also mentioned. The article discusses Holman's musical talents and that despite her diverse political life, she still found time for entertaining political audiences. In the early 1920s Holman formed a musical group, 'the Entertainers', and in the 1930s she formed a Labor Women's Choir.

Williamson, L. (2022) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the Western Australian Parliament: Experiences of representation and the associated representational dilemmas*. Prepared for the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee of the Parliament of Western Australia as part of the 2022 Parliamentary Research Program. Murdoch University.

Lola Williamson summarised the backgrounds of the seven Aboriginal parliamentarians elected to the Parliament of Western Australia. She provided details of each member's experiences and discussed issues relating to parliamentary representation at a state level. Entries for **Carol Martin, Josephine (Josie) Farrer, Divina D'Anna** and **Hon Rosetta Sahanna** were included. The paper highlighted their experiences and motivations for entering state politics and explored the representational dilemmas faced by them, including racism. It delved into how these experiences impacted their notion of fair representation in politics.



Read:

Online resource, 40p

<https://www.parliament.wa.gov.au/LolaWilliamsonReport.html>



Hon Rosetta (Rosie) Sahanna, WA's first indigenous member of the Legislative Council pictured at Parliament House, 2017. Photo: Westpix/West Australian Newspapers Limited WAN-0038239.



Wilson J., & McCann, J. (2012). *Representation of women in Australian parliaments*. Parliamentary Library, Department of Parliamentary Services, Parliament of Australia.

Read:

Online resource,
61p

https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/1481963/upload_binary/1481963.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22library/prspub/1481963%22

This background note from the Federal Parliamentary Library presents a range of data illustrating the level of women's representation at the Commonwealth, state and territory, and local government levels, with a particular focus on the Commonwealth Parliament. It presents statistical information about women parliamentarians, women in parliamentary leadership positions and ministries, women as chairs of parliamentary committees, and female candidates. It also includes some comparative data relating to women's representation in the state and territory parliaments, identifies current and historical trends, and refers to recent research on structural, social and cultural factors influencing women's representation in parliament.

The paper provides a useful contribution to the debate about the nature and level of women's representation in Australia's parliaments. Whilst beyond the scope of the paper to analyse the views and perceptions of women parliamentarians held by their colleagues, the media and the electorate, it draws attention to relevant research and articles by other writers who have examined gender issues in Australian parliamentary and political life.

Wycherley, P. (1997). *Mrs Cowan's clock: The location of the Edith Cowan memorial.* Edith Cowan University.

The article discusses the controversial nature of the location of a permanent memorial to the first woman elected to any Australian Parliament, **Edith Cowan**. Unveiled on 9 June 1934, the memorial to Edith Cowan is in the form of a clock tower situated at the entrance to King's Park. Located on a traffic island at the junction of Kings Park Road, Malcolm Street and Fraser Avenue, significantly it is the first civic monument erected in Western Australia to honour a woman. Constructed using Donnybrook freestone the clock tower features a working clock, art deco style light fixtures and wings. Underneath the clock face is a bronze plate depicting Cowan's face and another plaque bearing an inscription pointing to 'a life of service'.



Read:

Online resource,
43p

<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ecuworks/6746>



Irene Greenwood placing a wreath on the Edith Cowan Memorial as representative of the Women's Electoral Lobby following a march through King's Park, 1977. *Photo: State Library of Western Australia. BA3028/12.*



Read:

Online resource

<https://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders/biogs/WLE0162b.htm>

Wright, C. (2014). Cowan, Edith Dircksey. In Smart, J. & Swain, S. (Eds.). *The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia*.

This entry in the encyclopedia is dedicated to the life and leadership of **Edith Cowan**. The encyclopedia also features entries for **May Holman** (by Caitlin Stone) and **Dr Carmen Lawrence** (by Nikki Henningham) and **Giz Watson** (by Judy Lambert). The primary focus of this encyclopedia are the women who occupied leadership positions during the twentieth century, a time when Australian women were amongst the first women in the world to be enfranchised. Through a selection of thematic and individual entries, the encyclopedia includes over 600 entries, with a focus on women not already well documented in existing online resources. The entries vary in length and detail, the most extensive derived from interviews conducted as part of the partnership with the National Library. The encyclopedia captures the diverse ways in which women exercised leadership in the first century of Australian democracy. Described as the 'women of the pre-Google age', the authors note that while many of the women were richly rewarded for their achievements, their stories run the risk of fading as those who remember them pass on and this stands as a more permanent memorial to them and their contributions.

Women members and the clerks of the of the forty-first Parliament in the Legislative Assembly, July 2023. *Photo: Parliament House collection.*



Appendices

Milestones: Women in the Parliament of Western Australia

1920

The passage of the *Parliament (Qualifications of Women Act) 1920* meant that women could no longer be disqualified by sex or marriage for being elected to, or sitting and voting, as a member of the Legislative Council or the Legislative Assembly.

1921

The state general election was held in March/April 1921, the first election where women were permitted to nominate as candidates. Four female candidates contested seats, namely: Nell Dungey, Ada Bromham, Ada Butler and **Edith Cowan**. Only Edith Cowan (Natl) was successful. She was elected to the eleventh Parliament on 12 March 1921. When she took her seat, she became the first woman to do so in any Australian parliament.

1925

May Holman (ALP) was elected to the Legislative Assembly at a by-election to fill a vacancy caused by the death of her father. She was the first female to represent the Labor Party. At 31 years old, she was the youngest woman elected (until 2001) to the Western Australian Parliament.

1927

The 1927 state general election was held on 26 March 1927 and four female candidates contested the election. This included: **Edith Cowan** (West Perth) and **May Holman** (Forrest); Ada Bromham (Claremont) and Christina Bale (Leederville). On this occasion, May Holman was the only one elected and retained her seat until she died in a car accident on the eve of the 1939 state election.

1935

In 1935, **May Holman** became the first woman in the British Empire to serve ten years continuously in Parliament.

1936

Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver (Natl) was elected to the Legislative Assembly on 15 February 1936 to represent the seat of Subiaco, a seat she retained until 7 April 1956.

1941

In December 1941, during a debate on starting-price betting, **Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver** was the first woman to be suspended from the Legislative Assembly—and any Australian parliament—for refusing to withdraw a remark ruled as unparliamentary.

1947

Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver became Australia's first woman (honorary) cabinet minister when appointed on 1 April 1947. Then, on 7 October 1949 she became the first woman to serve as a salaried member of cabinet as the Minister for Health, Supply and Shipping. The history books also record her as being the oldest person ever, at 70 years, to receive their first appointment to a ministerial post in Western Australia.

1954

Ruby Hutchison (ALP) became the first woman elected to the Legislative Council at the state general election on 8 May 1954. Notably, she remained the only woman MLC throughout her seventeen-year term.

1966

History was made in the Parliament of Western Australia on 14 May 1966 when members of the Legislative Council, **Ruby Hutchison** and Fred Lavery married. By this union they became the first couple to serve a parliamentary term concurrently with their spouse in any house of an Australian Parliament.

1971

When **Lyla Elliott** (ALP) was elected to the seat of North-East Metropolitan province on 20 February 1971, she was the only woman member in the Legislative Council. She began her term of office on 22 May 1971.

1974

At the state general election on 30 March 1974, three women were elected to the twenty-eighth Parliament: **Lyla Elliott** (ALP), **Margaret McAleer** (Lib) and **Grace Vaughan** (ALP) to the Legislative Council. This was the first time that two or more women had served concurrently in the upper house. **June Craig** (Lib) was also elected to serve in the Legislative Assembly, the first Liberal woman to do so. She was appointed as Minister for Lands and Forests on 30 March 1974 and at that time she was only the second woman in Western Australia to have been appointed as a cabinet minister.

1977

Winifred (Win) Piesse was elected to the Legislative Council on 19 February 1977 for a term commencing 22 May 1977, and became the first woman to represent the National (Country) Party in either house of the Western Australian Parliament.

1980

On 23 February 1980, **Margaret McAleer** (Lib) was appointed to the role of Whip, in the Legislative Council. She became the first woman to be appointed to the position from either of the major parties in the Western Australian Parliament.

1983

Pamela (Pam) Beggs (ALP), **Pamela (Pam) Buchanan** (ALP), **Yvonne Henderson** (ALP) and **Jacqueline (Jackie) Watkins** (ALP) were elected to the thirty-first Parliament at the state election on 19 February 1983.

1986

At the state general election on 8 February 1986, **Dr Carmen Lawrence** (ALP) and **Dr Judyth Watson** (ALP) were elected to the seats of Subiaco and Canning respectively. This was the first time that women with doctorates were elected to the WA Parliament.

Pam Beggs and **Kay Hallahan** were the first women from the Labor Party to be sworn in as cabinet ministers. On 26 February 1986, Hallahan was appointed the Minister for Community Services; The Family; Youth; The Aged and Minister assisting the Minister for Women's Interests and Beggs was appointed Minister for Tourism; Racing and Gaming. Also, **Beryl Jones** (ALP) was elected to the Lower West province at the 1986 state general election for a term commencing 22 May in the Legislative Council.

1987

Kay Hallahan (ALP) was elected as the first woman deputy leader of a major party in the Legislative Council on 16 March 1987. **Beryl Jones** (ALP) became the first woman to chair a select committee in the Parliament of Western Australia. She chaired the Legislative Council's Select Committee into Charitable Collections from 28 April 1987.

1988

Yvonne Henderson (ALP) made history as the first woman to give birth while serving as a cabinet minister in Western Australia. Then, on 15 November 1988, **Dr Judyth Watson** (ALP) became the first female to chair a select committee in the Legislative Assembly. She was appointed chair of the Select Committee on the Reproductive Technology Working Party's Report from 15 November 1987 to 15 December 1988.

1989

At the state general election on 4 February 1989, five women were elected to serve in the thirty-third Parliament. **Dr Carmen Lawrence** (ALP) was elected as the member for Glendalough—her original seat of Subiaco was abolished in an electoral redistribution. **Cheryl Edwardes** (Lib) was elected for the seat of Kingsley and Dr Hilda Turnbull to Collie. When Dr Turnbull was elected, she became the first woman to represent the National (Country) Party in the Legislative Assembly. **Cheryl Davenport** (ALP), representing the South Metropolitan region and **Muriel Patterson** (Lib), representing the South West region were elected to the Legislative Council and began their parliamentary terms on 22 May 1989.

1990

At the state general election on 12 February 1990, **Dr Carmen Lawrence** (ALP) became the first female Premier in Australia. She appointed five women to her ministry, namely: **Kay Hallahan, Yvonne Henderson, Pamela (Pam) Beggs** and **Pamela Buchanan**. **Dr Judith (Judy) Edwards** (ALP) was elected in Maylands on 26 May 1990 at a by-election prompted by the resignation of Premier Peter Dowding (ALP).

1991

When Independent **Dr Elizabeth (Liz) Constable** was elected as the member for Floreat on 20 July 1991, this was the first time that a woman was elected to the Parliament of Western Australia without party endorsement.

1993

Diane Airey (Lib) was a member of the Legislative Council between February and May 1993, during which time Parliament did not sit and she was not sworn in. In 1989, Airey had contested the South Metropolitan region in third place on the Liberal Party ticket, behind the successful candidates: Legislative Council President, Hon Clive Griffiths and Hon Phillip Pental. Prior to the 1993 election, Pental resigned his seat to contest the lower house seat of South Perth and Airey was elected on a recount of the votes cast in 1989. She did not contest a seat in the 1993 election.

Kay Hallahan (ALP) resigned as MLC for the East Metropolitan region in January 1993, where she had served for a decade, to contest a seat in the Legislative Assembly. When she was elected to the seat of Armadale at the 6 February 1993 election, she became the first female member to serve in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. **Valma Ferguson** (ALP) served out the remainder of Kay Hallahan's parliamentary term for the East Metropolitan region in the Legislative Council until 21 May 1993 but was unsuccessful in gaining a further term at the state general election in 1993. **Alannah MacTiernan** (ALP) and **Barbara Scott** (Lib) were elected as MLCs for the East Metropolitan region and the South Metropolitan region and began their terms on 22 May 1993.

Diana Warnock (ALP) and **June van de Klashorst** (Lib) were elected to the Legislative Assembly for the seats of Perth and Swan Hills at the 6 February 1993 election.

Dr Carmen Lawrence (ALP) became the first woman Leader of the Opposition when the three-term Labor government she had led was defeated at the election by the Liberal–National coalition. **Cheryl Edwardes** (Lib) was appointed as the Attorney-General in Western Australia—the first woman to be appointed to the role of first law officer of the State.

1994

On 7 February 1994, **Kay Hallahan** (ALP) became the first female to hold the position of Deputy Leader of the State Parliamentary Opposition. On 12 March 1994, **Dr Carmen Lawrence** was elected as a member of the House of Representatives for Fremantle, making her the first woman to be elected to both the Western Australian and federal parliaments. **Diane (Dee) Margetts** became the second in 2001, and Louise Pratt the third, in 2007. **Michelle Roberts** (ALP) was elected to the thirty-fourth Parliament for the seat of Glendalough at the by-election held on 19 March 1994 to fill the vacancy left by Dr Lawrence. The electorate was abolished in the redistribution of 1994 and Roberts was elected to the thirty-fifth Parliament for Midland (new seat) on 14 December 1996. When Dr Lawrence was sworn in as Commonwealth Minister for Human Services and Health on 25 March 1994, she became the first Western Australian woman to serve as a minister in both jurisdictions.

1995

Valma Ferguson (ALP) re-entered the Legislative Council on 4 April 1995 to fill a casual vacancy, due to the resignation of Tom Butler.

1996

Megan Anwyll (ALP) was elected as the member for Kalgoorlie at a by-election on 16 March 1996 and was re-elected at the 1996 state general election. **Alannah MacTiernan** (ALP) resigned as the MLC for the East Metropolitan region on 21 November 1996 and was elected as the member for Armadale at the election on 14 December 1996.

Katina (Katie) Hodson-Thomas (Lib), **Monica Holmes** (Lib) and **Sheila McHale** (ALP) were also elected at 1996 election for seats in the Legislative Assembly. In the Legislative Council, **Helen Hodgson** (AD), **Ljiljanna Ravlich** (ALP), **Dr Christine (Chrissy) Sharp** (GWA) and **Giz Watson** (GWA) were elected.

Helen Hodgson of the Australian Democrats became the first woman to lead a parliamentary party in the Legislative Council. When **Ljiljanna Ravlich** took her seat in the Legislative Council on 22 May 1997, she became the first woman born in a non-English-speaking country (Split, Croatia) to be elected as a member of the Parliament of Western Australia. **Giz Watson** (GWA) and **Dr Christine (Chrissy) Sharp** (GWA) were the first women to represent the Greens Party in Western Australia. **Dr Sharp** represented the South West region and **Giz Watson** represented the North Metropolitan region. Further, **Giz Watson** was the first openly lesbian parliamentarian in Australia.

1997

Dr Christine (Chrissy) Sharp (GWA), became the first woman to chair a parliamentary standing committee in Western Australia when elected as chair of the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development on 26 June 1997.

2000

On 7 February 2000, **Cheryl Edwardes** became Western Australia's longest serving female cabinet minister. She was first made a minister in 1993 when appointed as the Attorney General; Minister for Women's Interests; and Parliamentary and Electoral Affairs.

2001

Dianne Guise (ALP), **Carol Martin** (ALP), **Margaret Quirk** (ALP), **Dr Janet Woollard** (Ind) and **Jaye Radisich** (ALP) were elected to the Legislative Assembly on 10 February 2001. Notably, **Carol Martin** (ALP) became the first Indigenous woman elected to any Australian parliament. Also, **Jaye Radisich** (ALP), at 24 years old, became the youngest woman elected to the Parliament of Western Australia (and the second youngest of either gender). **Kate Doust** (ALP), **Sue Ellery** (ALP), **Adele Farina** (ALP), **Robyn McSweeney** (ALP), **Diane (Dee) Margetts** (GWA) and **Louise Pratt** (ALP) were elected to the Legislative Council for parliamentary terms commencing on 22 May 2001. **Louise Pratt**, aged 29 years, was the youngest female elected to the Legislative Council to represent the East Metropolitan region. **Dee Margetts** was the first woman to be elected to both the Australian Senate (for the Greens on 1 July 1993) and the Legislative Council on 10 February 2001 (for a term commencing 22 May 2001).

On 1 May 2001, **Dianne Guise** (ALP) became the first woman to be appointed as the Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. **Carol Martin** became the first woman to chair a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly on 30 May 2001, when she was elected as chair of the Standing Committee on Education and Health. **Susan (Sue) Walker** (Lib) was elected as the member for Nedlands at a by-election on 9 June 2001 due to the resignation of the incumbent, former Premier Richard Court. This was the first time that the seat had been held by a woman.

2004

Wendy Duncan (Nat) was elected as the first woman to be President of the National Party of Western Australia in 2004.

2005

Lynn MacLaren (GWA) was elected for the South Metropolitan region on 15 February 2005 to fill a casual vacancy (until 22 May 2005) caused by the resignation of Jim Scott (GWA), who unsuccessfully contested the Legislative Assembly seat of Fremantle. At the state general election on 26 February 2005, **Judith (Judy) Hughes** (ALP) was elected as the member for Kingsley for the thirty-seventh Parliament. **Shelley Archer** (ALP), **Sheila Mills** (ALP), **Helen Morton** (Lib), **Margaret Rowe** (Lib), **Dr Sally Talbot** (ALP) and **Donna Taylor** (later Faragher) (Lib) were elected to the Legislative Council for terms commencing 22 May 2005.

2007

Louise Pratt (ALP) was elected as a Senator for Western Australia on 24 November 2007 (term began 1 July 2008), having resigned her seat in the Legislative Council on 29 October 2007.

2008

At the state general election on 6 September 2008, ten women were elected to the thirty-eighth Parliament. Both **Carolyn Burton** (ALP) and **Shelley Eaton** (ALP) were elected to the Legislative Council on 17 September 2008 to fill vacancies due to the resignation of Graham Giffard (ALP) and Vincent (Vince) Catania (ALP). In September 2008, **Sue Ellery** became the first woman Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council. **Dr Elizabeth Constable** was the first female Independent member to become a cabinet minister when appointed as the Minister for Education, Tourism and Women's Interests on 23 September 2008. When **Donna Faragher** (Lib) was appointed Minister for the Environment and Youth on 23 September 2008, she was 33 years old and became the youngest female minister in the Parliament of Western Australia.

2009

Adele Carles (GWA) made history when she became the first Greens member of a lower house seat in Australia. She was elected to the Legislative Assembly as the member for Fremantle on 16 May 2009 following the retirement of the sitting member, Jim McGinty (ALP).

2010

Linda Savage (ALP) was elected to the Legislative Council on 23 March 2010, following the sudden death of the sitting member, Jock Ferguson (ALP). Her election meant that for the first time, all six members representing a Legislative Council region (in this case the East Metropolitan region) were women. **Adele Carles** resigned from the GreensWA on 8 May 2010 and served out the remainder of her term as an Independent Green.

2014

Elizabeth (Libby) Mettam (Lib) was successful in contesting the by-election for the seat of Vasse on 18 October 2014 following incumbent Troy Buswell's (Lib) resignation due to ill health.

2016

Laine McDonald (ALP) was elected to the North Metropolitan region on 11 October 2016 to fill a casual vacancy caused by the retirement of Ken Travers (ALP).

2017

At the state general election on 11 March 2017, **Robyn Clarke** (ALP), **Emily Hamilton** (ALP), **Cassandra (Cassie) Rowe** (ALP), **Jessica Shaw** (ALP), **Jessica Stojkovski** (ALP) and **Sabine Winton** (ALP) were elected to the Legislative Assembly for the fortieth Parliament. **Amber-Jade Sanderson** (ALP) was also elected to the Legislative Assembly having previously been an MLC for the East Metropolitan region (22 May 2013 to 5 February 2017). In the Legislative Council, **Diane Evers** (GWA) and **Alannah MacTiernan** (ALP) were elected for a term commencing on 22 May 2017. MacTiernan had previously served as the MLC for the East Metropolitan region (22 May 1993 to 21 November 1996) and as the member for Armadale (14 December 1996 until 20 July 2010). **Alison Xamon** (GWA) was also elected to the Legislative Council for the East Metropolitan region. Previously, she had served as the MLC for the East Metropolitan region from 22 May 2009 to 21 May 2013.

Siblings **Cassandra (Cassie) Rowe** MLA (ALP) and **Samantha Rowe** MLC (ALP) became the first sisters to sit in any house of parliament in Australia, following Cassie's election in 2017. Samantha Rowe was elected to the East Metropolitan region on 5 April 2012 for term commencing 22 May 2013 and was re-elected in 2017. **Sue Ellery** (ALP) became the first woman to be Leader of the Legislative Council in Western Australia when she was appointed on 17 March 2017. **Elise Irwin** (Lib) was elected to the Legislative Council for the North Metropolitan region on 4 April 2017 to fill a vacancy due to the resignation of Peter Katsambanis (Lib) on 6 February 2017. She retired on 21 May 2017. **Catherine (Kate) Doust** (ALP) became the first woman elected as President of the Legislative Council in Western Australia on 22 May 2017.

2018

Alyssa Hayden (Lib) was elected to the fortieth Parliament for the seat of Darling Range on 23 June 2018 at a by-election. The vacancy arose because of Barry Urban's (ALP) resignation from the Legislative Assembly. On 5 February 2018, **Michelle Roberts** (ALP) became the first 'Mother of the House' in the Legislative Assembly, meaning that she was the person with the longest continuous service in the Legislative Assembly, having been elected as the member for Glendalough at a by-election on 19 March 1994. She was elected as the member for Midland (new seat) on 14 December 1996 and was re-elected in 2001, 2005, 2008, 2013, 2017 and again in 2021.

2019

Liza Harvey (Lib) became the first woman to lead the Liberal Party when she became the Leader of the Opposition on 13 June 2019, and served in this role until 24 November 2020.

2021

On 13 March 2021, a record forty-three women were elected to the forty-first Parliament at the state general election. **Caitlin Collins** (ALP) became the 100th woman to be sworn in to the Parliament of Western Australia following her election to Legislative Assembly for the seat of Hillarys on 13 March 2021—one hundred years after the election of Edith Cowan on 12 March 1921. **Hannah Beazley** (ALP), **Lara Dalton** (ALP), **Kim Giddens** (ALP), **Meredith Hammat** (ALP), **Jodie Hanns** (ALP), **Jane Kelsbie** (ALP), **Ali Kent** (ALP), **Lisa Munday** (ALP), **Rebecca Stephens** (ALP), **Dr Katrina Stratton** (ALP), and **Christine Tonkin** (ALP) were also elected to the Legislative Assembly. **Divina D’Anna** (ALP) became the second Indigenous woman elected as a member for the Kimberley at the 2021 election. **Mia Davies** (Nat) became the first Leader of the Opposition from the National Party, since Arthur Frederick Watts in 1947, when she was appointed to the position on 14 April 2021. **Michelle Roberts** (ALP) was elected as the first female Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on 29 April 2021.

Klara Andric (ALP), **Sandra Carr** (ALP), **Lorna Harper** (ALP), **Jackie Jarvis** (ALP), **Ayor Makur Chuot** (ALP), **Sophia Moermond** (LC), **Shelley Payne** (ALP) and **Rosetta (Rosie) Sahanna** (ALP) were elected to the Legislative Council on 13 March 2021. When **Rosetta (Rosie) Sahanna** (ALP) took her seat in the Legislative Council for a term commencing 22 May 2021, she became the first Indigenous member elected to the Legislative Council. Also noteworthy was the election of **Ayor Makur Chuot** (ALP) who became the first person born in Ethiopia, and the first of South Sudanese descent, to be elected to the Parliament of Western Australia. Also, **Klara Andric** (ALP) became the first member born in Serbia to serve in the Legislative Council when she was elected to the forty-first Parliament. She also has the distinction of being the first Serbian born woman member in any Australian parliament. Further, **Sophia Moermond** became the first member to represent the Legalise Cannabis Western Australia Party when she was elected to the Legislative Council.

On 25 May 2021, **Alanna Clohesy** (ALP) was elected as the President of the Legislative Council. Notably, the forty-first Parliament was the first in which both the presiding officers—President Clohesy and Speaker Roberts—were female. **Sue Ellery** (ALP) became the women with the longest period of continuous service in the Legislative Council after the new term began on 22 May 2021. First elected to the thirty-sixth Parliament for the South Metropolitan region on 10 February 2001, she was re-elected in 2005, 2008, 2013, 2017 and again in 2021 (for terms commencing 22 May).

2022

At a by-election on 17 September 2022, **Merome Beard** (Nat) was elected to serve in the Legislative Assembly as the member for North West Central. This followed a vacancy that arose with the resignation of Vince Catania (Nat). Beard's election meant that for the first-time women had almost equal representation (49.1 per cent) in the Legislative Assembly.

2023

Mia Davies (Nat) resigned as Leader of the Nationals WA and as Leader of the Opposition on 30 January 2023. **Libby Mettam** (Lib) was elected Leader of the WA Liberal Party on the same day. Having served as a member of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly and the House of Representatives, **Alannah MacTiernan** (ALP) retired as MLC for the South West region on 10 February 2023. **Rita Saffioti** (ALP) was appointed as the Deputy Premier; Treasurer; Minister for Transport; Tourism on 8 June 2023. **Magenta Marshall** (ALP) was elected as the member for Rockingham on 29 July 2023—the first woman to represent the seat—following the resignation of Premier Mark McGowan (ALP). Her election also meant that for the first time in Western Australia's parliamentary history, over half the membership of the Legislative Assembly was female.

Louise Kingston (Nat) was elected to the South West region on 19 September 2023, following a recount to fill the vacancy as a result of the disqualification of incumbent James Hayward. Merome Beard (Nat) resigned from the Nationals WA on 31 October 2023 and joined the Liberal Party on 7 November 2023.

2024

As of 8 March 2024, International Womens' Day, the composition of the forty-first Parliament comprised forty-five women; fifteen MLCs and thirty MLAs:

- Total number of women: 45/95 (or 47.37 per cent)
- Number of women in the Legislative Council: 15/36 (or 41.67 per cent)
- Number of women in the Legislative Assembly: 30/59 (50.85 per cent)

Hon Louise Kingston was sworn in on 19 September 2023 and became the 117th women elected to the Parliament of Western Australia. *Photo: Parliament House collection.*



In their own words: Women members' first speeches

New members of Parliament make what is now called a 'first' or 'inaugural' speech in the house to which they were elected. For many years these were known as 'maiden' speeches, however the official records and Hansard no longer refer to this term. First speeches tend to be autobiographical and often include insights and reflections that may be of interest to the generalist reader or the social historian.

Name (Alphabetical order by surname)	Party	First speech (Hansard* reference)
Hon Diane AIREY MLC	LIB	---
Hon Klara ANDRIC MLC	ALP	27 May 2021, pp. 853–70.
Megan Irene ANWYL MLA	ALP	9 August 2000, pp. 110–7.
Hon Shelley ARCHER MLC	ALP/IND	25 May 2005, pp. 2241–50.
Lisa Loraine BAKER MLA	ALP	11 November 2008, pp. 104–7.
Merome BEARD MLA	NAT/LIB	18 October 2022, pp. 4607–10.
Hannah Mary BEAZLEY MLA	ALP	4 May 2021, pp. 100–3.
Pamela Anne BEGGS MLA	ALP	22 March 1983, pp. 7–8.
Hon Elizabeth (Liz) Lloyd BEHJAT MLC	LIB	16 June 2009, pp. 4995–5012.
Hon Jacqui Ellen BOYDELL MLC	NAT	23 May 2013, pp. 1038–62.
Pamela Ann BUCHANAN MLA	ALP/IND	2 August 1984, pp. 358–61
Hon Helen Hong Hui BULLOCK MLC	ALP	3 June 2009, pp. 4576–80.
Hon Carolyn Anne BURTON MLC	ALP	26 November 2008, pp. 471–3.
Florence Gillies CARDELL-OLIVER MLA	Nat/LIB	25 August 1936, pp. 139–45.
Adele Simone CARLES MLA	GWA/IND	9 June 2009, pp. 4691–4.
Hon Sandra Anne CARR MLA	ALP	1 June 2021, pp. 938–55.
Robyn Marjorie Jane CLARKE MLA	ALP	16 May 2017, pp. 121–3.
Hon Alanna Therese CLOHESY MLC	ALP	12 June 2013, pp. 1327–31.
Caitlin Mary COLLINS MLA	ALP	4 May 2021, pp. 101–4.
Dr Elizabeth (Liz) CONSTABLE MLA	IND	11 September 1991, pp. 4473–7.
Edith Dircksey COWAN MLA	NatI	28 July 1921, pp. 15–21.
Margaret (June) CRAIG MLA	LIB	25 July 1974, pp. 14–6.
Divina Grace D'ANNA MLA	ALP	4 May 2021, pp. 132–5.
Lara DALTON MLA	ALP	29 April 2021, pp. 19–23.
Hon Cheryl May DAVENPORT MLC	ALP	6 September 1989, pp. 1798–805.
Mia Jane DAVIES MLC/MLA	NAT	MLC 23 June 2009, pp. 5350–5 (LC) 16 April 2013, pp. 71–5 (LA).
Hon Catherine (Kate) Esther DOUST MLC	ALP	30 May 2001, pp. 655–72.

Name (Alphabetical order by surname)	Party	First speech (Hansard* reference)
Wendy Maxine DUNCAN MLC/MLA	NAT	26 Feb 2008, pp. 256–9 (LC) 18 April 2013, pp 160–4 (LA).
Hon Shelley EATON MLC	ALP	25 November 2008, pp. 358–68.
Dr Judith (Judy) Mary EDWARDS MLA	ALP	31 May 1990, pp. 1601–5.
Cheryl Lynn EDWARDES MLA	LIB	30 March 1989, pp. 49–53.
Hon Suzanne (Sue) Mary ELLERY MLC	ALP	22 May 2001, pp. 242–8.
Hon Lyla Daphne ELLIOTT MLC	ALP	15 July 1971, pp. 6–8.
Eleni EVANGEL MLA	LIB	16 April 2013, pp. 55–9.
Hon Diane Marie EVERS MLC	GWA	24 May 2017, pp. 488–92.
Hon Donna Evelyn Mary FARAGHER (later Taylor) MLC	LIB	26 May 2005, pp. 12–4.
Josie FARRER MLA	ALP	17 April 2013, pp. 112–5.
Hon Adele FARINA MLC	ALP	30 May 2001, pp. 661–6.
Hon Valma (Val) Eileen FERGUSON MLC	ALP	4 April 1995, pp. 493–8.
Janine Marie FREEMAN MLA	ALP	12 November 2008, pp. 202–6.
Kim Elizabeth GIDDENS MLA	ALP	6 May 2021, pp. 336–40.
Glenys Jenolan GODFREY MLA	LIB	11 April 2013, pp. 13–5.
Dianne Joy GUISE MLA	ALP	2 May 2001, pp. 36–9.
Elsie (Kay) Kay HALLAHAN MLC/MLA	ALP	27 July 1983, pp. 333–41 (LC) 29 June 1993, pp. 584–8 (LA).
Hon Lorna HARPER MLC	ALP	25 May 2021, pp. 667–70.
Hon Alyssa Kathleen HAYDEN	LIB	17 June 2009, pp. 5121–5 (LC) 14 August 2018, pp. 4315–8 (LA).
Liza Mary HARVEY MLA	LIB	25 November 2008, pp. 432–6.
Emily Louise HAMILTON MLA	ALP	17 May 2017, pp. 199–203.
Meredith Jane HAMMAT MLA	ALP	5 May 2021, pp. 228–31.
Jodie Louise HANNS MLA	ALP	4 May 2021, pp. 136–8.
Yvonne Daphne HENDERSON MLA	ALP	2 August 1983, pp. 592–5.
Hon Helen Margaret HODGSON MLC	AD	27 May 1997, pp. 3195–200.
Katina (Katie) HODSON-THOMAS MLA	LIB	13 March 1997, pp. 313–5.
Monica Rose HOLMES MLA	LIB	13 March 1997, pp. 315–7.
Judith (Judy) HUGHES MLA	ALP	29 March 2005, pp. 19–22.
Hon Ruby Florence HUTCHISON MLC	ALP	17 June 1954, pp. 5–6.
Hon Elise IRWIN MLC	LIB	16 May 2017, pp. 74–8.
Hon Jackie Ann JARVIS MLC	ALP	25 May 2021, pp. 649–70.

Name (Alphabetical order by surname)	Party	First speech (Hansard* reference)
Hon Beryl Lillian JONES MLC	ALP	25 June 1986, pp. 798–801.
Elizabeth (Jane) Jane KELSIE MLA	ALP	6 May 2021, pp. 340–3.
Alison (Ali) Elizabeth KENT MLA	ALP	6 May 2021, pp. 311–5.
Hon Louise Maree KINGSTON MLC	NAT	12 October 2023, pp. 5354–7.
Carmen Mary LAWRENCE MLA	ALP	10 June 1986, pp. 16–8.
Hon Lynn Ellen MACLAREN MLC	GWA	17 June 2009, pp. 5128–32.
Alannah Joan Geraldine MACTIERNAN	ALP	29 June 1993, pp. 492–7 (LC) 23 May 2017, pp. 351–4 (LA).
Hon Ayor Makur CHUOT MLC	ALP	3 June 2021, pp. 1239–43.
Hon Diane (Dee) Elizabeth MARGETTS MLC	GWA	23 May 2001, pp. 340–4.
Magenta MARSHALL MLA	ALP	15 August 2023, pp. 3773–7.
Carol Anne MARTIN MLA	ALP	1 May 2001, pp. 17–20.
Margaret MCALEER MLA	LIB	7 August 1974, pp. 341–4.
Hon Laine Courtney MCDONALD MLC	ALP	18 October 2016, pp. 7171–5.
Simone Frances MCGURK MLA	ALP	17 April 2013, pp. 115–9.
Sheila Margaret MCHALE MLA	ALP	11 March 1997, pp. 108–2.
Hon Robyn Mary MCSWEENEY MLC	LIB	31 May 2001, pp. 787–91.
Elizabeth (Libby) METTAM MLA	LIB	11 November 2014, pp. 7968–70.
Hon Sheila MILLS MLC	LIB	25 May 2005, pp. 2264–6.
Andrea Ruth MITCHELL MLA	LIB	6 November 2008, pp. 19–21.
Hon Sophia MOERMOND MLC	LCP	2 June 2021, pp. 1066–8.
Hon Helen Margaret MORTON MLC	LIB	25 May 2005, pp. 2266–9.
Lisa Anne MUNDAY MLA	ALP	4 May 2021, pp. 129–32.
Lisa Margaret O'MALLEY MLA	ALP	17 May 2017, pp. 173–5.
Rhonda Kathleen PARKER MLA	LIB	12 April 1995, pp. 1333–7.
Hon Muriel Grace PATTERSON MLC	LIB	27 September 1989, pp. 2849–50.
Hon Shelley Nicole PAYNE MLC	ALP	25 May 2021, pp. 657–63.
Hon Winifred (Win) Margaret PIESE MLC	NAT	16 August 1977, pp. 445–8.
Hon Louise Clare PRATT MLC	ALP	23 May 2001, pp. 344–9.
Margaret Mary QUIRK MLA	ALP	23 May 2001, pp. 398–403.
Jaye Amber RADISICH MLA	ALP	3 May 2001, pp. 205–11.
Hon Ljiljanna Maria RAVLICH MLC	ALP	27 May 1997, pp. 3207–12.
Michelle Hopkins ROBERTS MLA	ALP	30 March 1994, pp. 11066–9.
Cassandra (Cassie) Michelle ROWE MLA	ALP	16 May 2017, pp. 101–5.

Name (Alphabetical order by surname)	Party	First speech (Hansard* reference)
Hon Margaret Anne Bernadette ROWE MLC	LIB	26 May 2005, pp. 15–7.
Rita SAFFIOTI MLA	ALP	13 November 2008, pp. 274–7.
Hon Rosetta (Rosie) SAHANNA MLC	ALP	26 May 2021, pp. 744–6.
Hon Amber-Jade SANDERSON MLC/MLA	ALP	23 May 2013, pp. 1042–6 (LC) 16 May 2017, pp. 111–5 (LA).
Hon Linda Rosemary SAVAGE MLC	ALP	30 March 2010, pp. 1107–10.
Hon Barbara Mary SCOTT MLC	LIB	29 June 1993, pp. 497–501.
Hon Dr Christine (Chrissy) SHARP MLC	GWA	10 June 1997, pp. 3546–550.
Jessica Jane SHAW MLA	ALP	11 May 2017, pp. 17–21.
Rebecca Sue STEPHENS MLA	ALP	6 May 2021, pp. 321–3.
Jessica Mary Christine STOJKOVSKI MLA	ALP	18 May 2017, pp. 273–6.
Dr Katrina STRATTON MLA	ALP	4 May 2021, pp. 125–7.
Hon Sally Elizabeth TALBOT MLC	ALP	24 May 2005, pp. 5–8.
Christine Maelisa TONKIN MLA	ALP	5 May 2021, pp. 221–4.
Hilda Margaret TURNBULL MLA	NAT	4 April 1989, pp. 152–7.
June Dorothy van de KLASHORST MLA	LIB	17 June 1993, pp. 21–4.
Hon Grace Sydney VAUGHAN MLC	ALP	31 July 1974, pp. 105–14.
Susan Elizabeth WALKER MLA	LIB	28 June 2001, pp. 1574–7.
Diana Muriel WARNOCK MLA	ALP	22 June 1993, pp. 111–8.
Jacqueline Patricia WATKINS MLA	ALP	27 July 1983, pp. 412–5.
Hon Giz WATSON MLC	GWA	10 June 1997, pp. 3534–8.
Dr Judyth WATSON MLA	ALP	17 June 1986, pp. 310–3.
Sabine Elisabeth WINTON MLA	ALP	16 May 2017, pp. 124–8.
Janet May WOOLLARD MLA	IND	22 May 2001, pp. 266–70.
Hon Alison Marie XAMON MLC	GWA	24 June 2009, pp. 5408–13.

Notes

- * Hansard (parliamentary debates) are available online: <http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au>
- ** Hon Diane Airey was a member of the Legislative Council between February and May 1993, during which time Parliament did not sit and she was not sworn in.



