

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person  
**Entry ID:** PR00595

## Hallahan, Elsie Kay

(1941 - )

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**Born** 4 November, 1941, Perth Western Australia Australia

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**Occupation** Parliamentarian, Policewoman

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### Summary

Kay Hallahan was the first woman to sit in both houses of Western Australian Parliament. An Australian Labor Party member she was elected to the Legislative Council of Western Australia on 19 February 1983. She served until 13 January 1993. She switched to the Legislative Assembly when she was elected 6 February 1993, serving until 14 December 1996.

### Details

Elsie Kay Downing (Kay) was born in Perth in 1941 to Eric Stanley Downing, a timber worker, and his wife Elsie. She attended Perth Girls High School, then worked as a calculator operator and office worker, and also undertook various forms of community work. She joined the police force in 1969, and was forced to stand down three years later when she married Pat Hallahan in May, 1972. Hallahan then studied social work and graduated with a degree in 1981, after which she worked at various community health care and rehabilitation facilities, including the Alcohol and Drug Authority. She joined the Australian Labor Party in 1976, and was elected to Legislative Council of the Western Australian Parliament in 1983. She served until 1993, and was then elected to the Legislative Assembly where she remained until 1996. Kay Hallahan was the first woman to sit in both houses of Western Australian Parliament. In 2002 Hallahan received an Order of Australia for her contribution to the State Parliament and a wide range of community organisations.

### Published resources

#### Edited Book

Biographical Register of Members of the Parliament of Western Australia, Vol. 2, 1930-1990, Black, David and Bolton, Geoffrey, 1990

#### Book

We Hold Up Half the Sky: The Voices of Western Australian ALP Women in Parliament, Watson, Judyth [ed.], 1994

#### Book Section

Making a Difference: Women in the West Australian Parliament 1921-1999, Black, David and Phillips, Harry, 2000

#### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Author Details

Lisa MacKinney

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