

INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY

Motion

HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan) [11.46 am] — without notice: I move —

That this house —

- (a) acknowledges that Wednesday, 19 November 2014, was International Men's Day and thanks the men of Western Australia for their contribution to this state;
- (b) recognises that in order for our interdependent society to be a truly great one, it requires, amongst other things, male role models who are both positive and effective; and
- (c) implores all residents of Western Australia to encourage men and boys, irrespective of opportunities, finances or personal circumstances, to make life decisions based on the principles of integrity, dignity and respect.

I am pleased to move this motion today. Yesterday was International Men's Day. I begin by quoting author Brodi Ashton, who said, "Heroes are made by the paths they choose, not the powers they are graced with." One could replace the word "powers" with words such as "upbringing" so that that statement would read, "Heroes are made by the paths they choose, not the upbringing they are graced with." Equally, we could do the same with words such as "finances", "opportunities" and "personal circumstances".

I want to see our state empower all men and boys, irrespective of opportunities, finances and personal circumstances, to choose the hero path. In recognition of yesterday's celebration of International Men's Day, I seek to once again propose the creation of a minister for men's interests in our great state. Often when I talk about this issue, I inevitably observe the body language of some women who, in effect, say that men are the vast majority of perpetrators and they already have all the power so why should we give them any more? However, when I go into greater detail and unpack why it is so vital for our society to consist of healthy men who demonstrate courage, integrity, commitment, kindness and honesty, the penny starts to drop. These same women, who minutes earlier were sceptical of the proposal, quickly appreciate how beneficial it is to them, to children and to society as a whole to be living, relating and residing with so-called good men and good boys. It is critically important that my remarks today are understood to be underpinned by these two statements of fact. Firstly, it is just as vital for our society to consist of healthy women who demonstrate integrity, dignity and respect; and, secondly, there are a great number of faithful men—real heroes—who already exist in our society. I am really calling for all of us to get alongside men, teens and boys when they are feeling down and out, when they are struggling or just do not know how to choose the right paths.

On 22 May last year, in my Address-in-Reply speech, I outlined the reasons why we need a minister for men's interests. Today I take the opportunity to look at the "how": on what pillars would a portfolio of men's interests need to be structured and what might be its key objectives? I am of the view that the six key elements to a successful men's interests portfolio are: firstly, reaching unreached men; secondly, strengthening families; thirdly, helping men grow; fourthly, developing mentors, fifthly, developing leaders; and, lastly, involving men in serving the community, their workplace, their families and each other. Only by working alongside and establishing men to maturity will we see the fruits of strengthening the foundations of lives, families and workplaces.

I begin by looking at the first pillar—reaching the unreached. A minister for men's interests would be well placed to introduce lost men to resources and involve men in sharing their lives. The "unreached" could be men suffering from isolation by virtue of geography, relationship breakdown, gaming or some other addiction, depression, or their work situation. The effectiveness of peer relationships in reaching unreached men can literally make the difference between life and death. Additionally, a minister for men's interests could research and develop programs to help men connect meaningfully and regularly.

I move to the second pillar—strengthening families. On the radio I hear a regular segment by Dr Bruce Robinson from the Fathering Project. Dr Bruce Robinson is a hero; indeed, this past year he was Western Australia's Australian of the Year. He talks openly and candidly about the challenges facing fathers, and gives some excellent practical advice on how a dad can really connect and engage with his kids. These tips are the type of messages a minister for men's interests could distribute more widely. I am confident that that information and creative ideas that strengthen families will manifest themselves in secure children and fortified marriages.

I moved to the third pillar—helping men grow. A close friend of mine went camping some time ago and commented on how she saw a group of women taking a scout group camping. There was not one grown man amongst the group, so these women—I might say, good on them—took these boys camping and showed them how to build a fire, how to set up a tent, and how to work on developing their knot-tying skills. On the dried-out lake bed not far from this campsite were grown men driving like hoons, doing doughnuts and burnouts and, in

some instances, almost colliding with other hoons. As my friend was telling this story, we asked ourselves the question: “What’s wrong with this picture?” Indeed, last Saturday as I was reading the morning newspaper I had another one of those “What’s wrong with this picture?” moments. I read the story of a 24-year-old male who, I understand from the report, was said to have been evading police to the point of driving on the wrong side of the road, only to collide head-on with another vehicle, injuring the two occupants of the other vehicle, to say nothing of killing his 23-year-old female relative, who was a passenger, and injuring his other relative, a four-year-old boy. Helping men grow means helping boys launch from selfish, immature, ego-driven boyhood into mature, nurturing, responsible manhood. The end result is men who put aside their own selfish desires to do what is good for others, no matter what the cost.

Wellness is much more than merely physical or mental health. When talking about wellness, it is useful to use the Seven Dimensions of Wellness model developed by the University of California. Each of the seven dimensions outlined in this model act and interact in a way that underwrites wellness. Using an abridged version that I have taken from the university’s website, I note the following seven dimensions —

Social Wellness is the ability to relate to and connect with other people in our world. Our ability to establish and maintain positive relationships with family, friends and co-workers contributes to our Social Wellness.

Emotional Wellness is the ability to understand ourselves and cope with the challenges life can bring ...

Spiritual Wellness is the ability ... to develop congruency between values and actions and to realize a common purpose that binds creation together...

Environmental Wellness is the ability to ... make a positive impact on the quality of our environment, be it our homes, our communities or our planet ...

Occupational Wellness is the ability to get personal fulfillment from our jobs or our chosen career fields while still maintaining balance in our lives ...

Intellectual Wellness is the ability and ... desire to learn new concepts, improve skills and seek challenges in pursuit of lifelong learning ...

Physical Wellness is the ability to ... recognize that our behaviors have a significant impact on our wellness and adopting healthful habits ... while avoiding destructive habits ...

I acknowledge the excellent work done by Veronica Pennell, a parliamentary intern, who prepared the report, “A minister for men’s interests and a Western Australian men’s health and wellbeing strategy: What can we learn from other jurisdictions?” In her recently completed report, Veronica states —

Much can be learned from the advances made in the status of women in Australian society, with many of these improvements resulting from:

- evidence based research;
- targeted policy initiatives, such as in relation to breast and cervical cancer
- advocacy, community development and education; and
- having Ministerial oversight to ensure integration and implementation.

I would like to thank Veronica for the time and effort she put into this report. I found it a useful resource, and I concur with the conclusion, which states —

For a strategy of this magnitude to be successful, Ministerial oversight will be required to:

- ensure accountability and coordination across community and government sectors;
- define priorities for action;
- harness the potential synergies available within current initiatives, particularly at the community level; and
- evaluate incremental success to inform, and modify practice.

I moved earlier through the various pillars, and I have addressed three so far. The fourth and fifth are developing mentors and developing leaders, which, due to the limited time today, I will group together. In effect, the objectives of developing mentors and developing leaders are also key areas for succession planning in our society—in other words, good men teaching others how to be good men. In their article “Peer Influence in Children and Adolescents: Crossing the Bridge from Developmental to Intervention Science”, Gifford-Smith and

others write that peer relationships influence the escalation of problem behaviour in youth. I quote from the article's abstract —

Ironically, the most common public interventions for deviant youth involve segregation from mainstream peers and aggregation into settings with other deviant youth.

The article looks at the peer contagion effect, and although I do not have the time to comment on the strategies outlined in the article, the issue of peer contagion and how it can be influenced by good leadership and intentional mentoring interests me. In the research article "Peer Contagion in Child and Adolescent Social and Emotional Development", Thomas Dishion and Jessica Tipsord conclude —

Adult structure, monitoring, and leadership likely are major moderators of peer contagion effects in adolescents' everyday environment and especially for reducing peer contagion during intervention studies.

A minister for men's interests is again best placed to review the research and foster mentoring and leadership programs that are already available, identify gaps or areas where they are not available, and monitor their effectiveness. As Benjamin Franklin said —

Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.

The last of the pillars upon which a minister for men's interests should be based is one of service. Serving others takes us from a space of saying, "It's all about me and what I can get" to saying, "It's about someone else and what I can give." Serving others is an essential part of a healthy community. This country has a fine and proud history of service. Those who have served in the armed forces, those who have served in their communities and today's volunteers are the oft-forgotten heroes who humbly serve Western Australia in myriad ways. A minister for men's interests could build on this solid foundation of service by urging men to make life decisions based on the principles of integrity, dignity and respect.

With those words, I commend the motion to the house.

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [12 noon]: When I saw the motion on the notice paper, I went to the International Men's Day website, which states —

Objectives of International Men's Day include a focus on men's and boy's health, improving gender relations, promoting gender equality, and highlighting positive male 'role models ...

It also told me that the November date for the day is a deliberate one as it interfaces with the popular Movember Foundation charity event. Movember is something that we are living with at the moment in this chamber, so I thought I would take the opportunity to talk about that. That is the subject on which I will make my comments in just over a couple of minutes. Movember is about concentrating —

Hon Robyn McSweeney: Here's one of them here!

Hon SUE ELLERY: That is one of them! There are many of them—they are everywhere!

Movember is a movement that started in South Australia basically with a bunch of guys—I guess they would not mind being described as hipsters—who decided that they could do something by growing a hideous, 1970s porn star-type moustache and getting their friends to give them some money to draw attention to men's health. It has now developed into a sophisticated charity. Their website refers to the state of men's health in Australia and to the fact that every hour more than four men in Australia die from potentially preventable conditions. They say that the reasons for the poor state of men's health are numerous and complex—we know that to be true—and include —

- Lack of awareness and understanding of the health issues men face
- Men not openly discussing their health and how they're feeling
- Reluctance to take action when men don't feel physical or mentally well
- Men engaging in risky activities that threaten their health
- Stigmas surrounding mental health
- Men are less likely than women to seek help for health concerns, and also less likely to use health care services

The Movember Foundation aims to change that by putting a fun twist on what is in fact a serious issue. It uses the moustache as a catalyst to bring about change, to give men the opportunity to talk about their health and to encourage the group they call Mo Sistas the opportunity to talk to the Mo Bros in our life about their health. I regularly talk to the Mo in my life about his health, although he does not seem to take any notice of what I say!

However, I want to focus seriously on mental health problems. Almost half, 48.1 per cent—this is a staggering statistic—of Australian men have had a mental health problem at some point in their life. That includes three men in my family, including my uncle—my father’s only brother—who, in his 60s, took his own life alone in his shed in South Australia after a lifetime of serious depression. The Movember website states —

Mental health and wellbeing is equally important to physical health and wellbeing. It is now well documented that both are linked and many of the things that help with our physical health ... also improve our mental health.

Mental health problems in men can often go undetected or untreated. The reasons for this are numerous and complex but can often be attributed to a lack of awareness that there is a problem in the first place. Men may not be able to recognise or confidently articulate the signs and symptoms that they experience. There is additional pressure due to associated stigma (shame and embarrassment) preventing them from taking action and accessing mental health services. Some men can instead act out with risk taking behaviour to numb or avoid the real problems they face. To many men, being “manly” means not admitting to any vulnerabilities or expressing emotions. However, men are not alone in what they are experiencing ...

As I indicated, a group of men in the WA Parliament have decided to join in the Movember activities and we are seeing several in this chamber, as I said, looking a little like 1970s porn stars! I encourage those who have not yet done so to go to the Movember website to donate. The team that members will be looking for is called House of Mo. I encourage them to donate. I know that Hon Ken Travers has, because he sent our members an email and I took the opportunity to make a donation last night. I therefore encourage other members to do the same.

HON LIZ BEHJAT (North Metropolitan) [12.05 pm]: I am delighted to speak on this motion and to give support to my very good friend and colleague Hon Nick Goiran for bringing it to the house today.

If I am not mistaken, Madam Deputy President, I think we have students from the Mater Dei College in the gallery. I welcome them into the gallery today. They come from the electorate of North Metropolitan Region, which I represent, and are most welcome here today. It is great to see them enjoying Parliament in action on a Thursday morning when we quite often have very good debates of a non-partisan nature on motions that we can bring to the house.

When my friend and colleague Hon Nick Goiran opened the debate, he mentioned that when he had previously risen to speak about International Men’s Day and suggested that there needed to be a minister for men’s interests, he had noticed a shift in the body language of several women around the chamber. I have to say—I put it out there today—that I was one of those people who rolled their eyes at his suggestion. However, as with all things that my colleague brings to this house, he makes us think about a lot of things in a different way. One thing Hon Nick Goiran does is make us step outside the box that we tend to put ourselves into and think about things. Today I am standing in this place very proudly to say that I completely support him in his bid for a minister for men’s interests in any future government of Western Australia. So, Hon Nick Goiran, you have got me totally on side for that! There you are!

We often talk about getting the balance right in many things that we do in our life. We talk about the balance between our work life and our home life, eating a balanced diet, and being able to argue and discuss matters in a balanced way. There is also the notion of ensuring that our children receive influences from people in their life in a balanced way. Not having that balance in their life is certainly one of the things, unfortunately, and through no circumstance of their own making, from which very many children suffer in Western Australia, Australia and around the world. In my opinion, it is vitally important that children—boys in particular—have a loving, nurturing and positive relationship with not only their mother, but also their father. That is preferable if it is able to happen. Although it is not always possible, they definitely need a loving and nurturing relationship from another male influence in their life.

In keeping with the theme of getting the balance right, it is interesting to note that we celebrated International Men’s Day yesterday, as the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, in conjunction with Movember. Together with the Leader of the Opposition, I share her support of those taking part in Movember. Our Treasurer, Hon Mike Nahan, shaved his moustache off at the beginning of November so that he could regrow it for Movember. I have said to him that I hope that he shaves it off again at the end of November, because I actually think he looks better without it! As for some of our colleagues around the chamber who also very rightly joined Movember, I think I will be pleased to see 1 December come around, as I do not think it is a good look on some of them! But there we are!

Keeping with the theme of balance, today is Universal Children’s Day. It is no mistake that International Men’s Day is held before Universal Children’s Day. Again, we get that balance of looking at what people need to

celebrate. We match the two days together to highlight the importance of ensuring that we develop healthy, positive relationships between men and children. As the Leader of the Opposition said, the theme for this year's International Men's Day is working together for men and boys. That is not just men and boys working to get the best relationships that they can; it is working together with women on that. Humanity must work together to ensure that we have positive role models for young boys. There are some absolutely dreadful things happening on the geopolitical scene across the world, and I do not want to dwell on the negative, suffice to say, in my opinion, the reason a number of these young men around the world are engaging in atrocities is because they have lost their moral compasses, a sense of brotherhood and a sense of direction in their lives. I think that is because they have probably not had the influence of very strong, good male role models in their lives. That may simply be because the male influences in their lives did not have that role model in their lives either. It is really important that we get that right.

I am very lucky in my own personal situation with my son that he has a very loving, nurturing and personal relationship with my husband, his father. I have a really loving and nurturing relationship with my son, but the relationship my husband has with him is different. That is rightly so, because men and women in marriages bring together the wholeness and the balance that I have been talking about. We need to recognise that and pass it on to our boys, in particular, so that when they become fathers they can pass on what they have learned during their youth. In order for male role models to do what we want them to do, to provide this positivity to young men, they have to be healthy and in a good mental state themselves. Of course, as the Leader of the Opposition rightly pointed out, we find that particularly men greatly suffer depression and suicide. Women, as we know, quite often find it easier to discuss their problems and issues with each other. Girlfriends will often go out and have coffee and chat for long hours on the phone. They are able to share the problems that they are experiencing in their lives, whether they are physical health problems, mental health problems or relationship problems, but for some reason that is just not the manly thing to do. That is a way it has been described in the past—harden the something up—it is not what men do. That is not right, men should be able to sit down and talk about their problems. I am very pleased to see that a lot of funding is going out in recognition of these sorts of things. I know our Minister for Mental Health more often than not has men's mental health issues very much in the forefront of her mind. Our Mental Health Commissioner, Tim Marney, is a fantastic male role model for people who have suffered depression. In the past Tim has spoken very openly about his own struggle with depression. I can think of no-one better to head up the Mental Health Commission than Tim. I congratulated him for having the guts to speak out openly, because we know that it is difficult for men to do that from time to time.

Quickly, to put some things on the record about funding for men's mental health initiatives. In February this year, in the recent mental health initiative funding round, a \$10 000 grant was given to the Beverley Community Resource Centre for a one-day event to build men's awareness of depression and suicide in the Beverley community. Men experience specific issues in rural and regional areas, and they need to be looked after well. The Collie and Harvey Local Drug Action Group held youth camps—one for men and one for women—to provide the opportunity to learn more about suicide prevention and develop resilience and life skills to avoid suicide. Other funding grants include, in July, the Kurungal Council Local Drug Action Group held camps to raise awareness amongst Aboriginal communities of problems with drug and alcohol addiction, depression and suicide. There is an incredibly good website resource under the auspices of beyondblue called mantherapy.org.au. In a somewhat light-hearted manner, men can go to that very useful site that has toolkits to help them deal with issues. How do we come out and talk about issues such as depression and suicide? Bringing motions like this one to the house, as Hon Nick Goiran has done today, gives us the opportunity to put on the record that it is important that we have strong male role models for our boys and our girls. As have other members in the chamber with their fathers, I had a wonderful relationship with my late father and I appreciate what he has done in being part of me today. Thank you, Hon Nick Goiran.

HON DONNA FARAGHER (East Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [12.16 pm]: I rise to speak on the motion before us, particularly part (b) of the motion that relates to male role models who are both positive and effective. I want to bring to the debate a particular organisation based at the University of Western Australia that I have had the opportunity to assist in a small way—that is, the WA Fathering Project. Hon Nick Goiran briefly mentioned this project. As Hon Nick Goiran indicated, the project was founded by Professor Bruce Robinson, a very much respected respiratory physician and 2013 West Australian of the Year. For members who might not be familiar with the project, its overall goal, which fits well with part (b) of the motion before us, is to help fathers and father figures realise how important they are in a child's life, encouraging them to be positively and strongly involved. Importantly, its aim is to be proactive rather than reactive by ensuring that children have strong and appropriate father figures early in their lives before they reach the stage at which children are perhaps at greater risk of developing problems such as substance abuse, antisocial behaviour, low self-esteem and depression. Other members have talked about mental health issues. The project does not in any way take away from the incredibly important and powerful role that mothers and female role models have in a child's life, but it does argue that fathers are very strong influences. I agree with that. I only need to look at the

strong and positive role that my father has and continues to play in my life. He is very much my go-to person, not only when we have a leak in the house or something, because I know that he will be able to tell me how to fix it, but also who I have gone to talk to about many of the life decisions that I have made in my 39 years. I now also see my husband's role in the lives of our two children. Men can have a positive influence on children in a variety of ways that can be quite simple, but at the same time incredibly effective. My husband and my children love to have special excursions without mum. He takes them off to go to the Zoo or, now that Clare is getting a bit older, they go tenpin bowling or even just going down to the shops—inevitably, although I have given them a list, they come back home with a lot more than I asked them to get. These are incredibly special times not only for my husband, but particularly for my daughter and increasingly my son.

We have talked about the important role of fathers, but it is also recognised that father figures are incredibly important. I want to reflect on an article that Professor Robinson wrote that was published in *The West Australian* in 2013. He said —

I once sat next to a businessman on a plane who noticed I was editing a draft of my book *Daughters and their Dads*. I asked him if he had kids. He said no, “I have a boyfriend and a dog”. But he said he did have two nieces. He nearly fainted when I told him that this book was therefore relevant to him. What he hadn't realised was that as an uncle he could be a powerful “father-figure” in the life of his nieces.

People often think that the University of WA Fathering Project is only for dads. It is not. Many kids don't have access to a father or have a father who is just not interested in learning how to do a good job of fathering. So we focus a lot on the concept of father-figures. Many people describe having had a father-figure who made a big difference in their lives, such as a grandfather, stepfather, uncle, older brother, father-in-law, schoolteacher, youth leader, sports coach, pastor or family friend.

He goes on to say —

Father-figures matter where dad is still around but they are especially important where there is no dad. And when dad is still “around” but not interested, or is even a negative influence on a child, then a father-figure can become a vital confidant, confidence builder and affirming influence.

Members and particularly Hon Nick Goiran might be interested to know that yesterday, when I knew that this motion was coming before the house, I got an update from the chief executive officer of the Fathering Project, Wayne Bradshaw. I am pleased to say that the Fathering Project is growing, particularly in Western Australian schools. In the past year, they have spoken to around 8 000 people about the project. Fathering projects are being established at a number of primary schools and these are self-supporting groups, generally led by a dad ambassador. These groups are establishing their own aims and activities in line with the vision of the project. Again, some of those activities can be as simple as establishing a walk to school day with the dads in charge. Importantly, these groups are strongly supported by the principals of the schools where they operate.

I thank Hon Nick Goiran for bringing this motion to the house today as it has given me an opportunity to say a few words with respect to this organisation. I think that all members would agree that good men can and do play an incredibly important role in the lives of children, and it is important that we acknowledge that. I will conclude, perhaps quite aptly, with a quote again from Professor Robinson from that same article. He says —

We have heard many stories of children whose lives were changed because they had such helpful father-figures. We encourage all men to think about children whom they are in a position to influence positively, create some safe one-on-one times, listen to them without preaching and speak into their lives, helping them realise how special they are and how much you believe in them, even if everyone else does not.

HON PETER KATSAMBANIS (North Metropolitan) [12.23 pm]: It is a pleasure to speak on this motion. I commend Hon Nick Goiran for not only bringing this motion to the house today, but also his continuing interest in the positive role of men in today's society. Unfortunately, I will start off on a really negative note. Could members imagine if we came into this place and one of the women members in this house moved a motion about International Women's Day and then a bunch of blokes got up and spoke to that motion, one after the other—there would be outrage. I am not condemning people for speaking but it goes to show that far too often in our society in 2014 the idea of men as role models is being formed from a feminised perspective. Hon Liz Behjat pointed out those commercials on man therapy that are effectively targeted at middle-aged men like me. She said that they are a “toolkit”. I put it to members and I have asked a lot of my friends what they think of the person in that commercial. They do not use the word “kit”, they usually use the word “tool”. Possibly, those commercials were thought up by female advertising executives. I do not mean in any disrespectful way to denigrate the role of women. I have stood up in this place before and said that in many cases it is the women who are actually holding the fort because men have given up the ghost, particularly in rearing children. I have actually used the term “man-up” for men in our society who create children but run away and do not rear children. It is a sad statistic that the average father spends 10 minutes of one-on-one time with their

children every day—a figure I got from the International Men’s Day website that Hon Sue Ellery mentioned in her contribution. That is a sad reflection on modern times. Of course, there are many boys who do not encounter a male in their day-to-day life at all. I have said before that in a single-parent household it is traditionally a woman—not exclusively—who brings up the family, and is an absolute saint as far as I am concerned. That woman hands over the child to mainly female primary schoolteachers and then collects that child at the end of the day and goes back home. There is no real male role model for the whole day for so many children in our society, be it a positive or a negative role model. What we have successfully done as a community, sadly so in my opinion, is to denigrate the role of men in certain professions and occupations, primary school teaching being one of them. Too many people in our society snigger if a young man chooses primary school teaching as a career option. I have met some wonderful males who are not only great primary school teachers but also great role models as primary school teachers. I encourage more men to look at it as a career option because not only is teaching a good profession for everyone, but also they will be positively putting back into society by acting as positive and strong male role models.

I do not know how quickly we can reverse this trend in which males have either chosen to be or have been marginalised in our community. I do not think this serves us well. In his motion Hon Nick Goiran says that we have an interdependent society and that interdependence should always include males and females. Yes, many men have to step up to the mark, but some of them do not know how. For a lot of men who do not know how to act in our society as positive role models, who do not know how to display principles of integrity, dignity and respect, we must ask ourselves how they were brought up. Were they brought up with absent male role models as well? Quite possibly. So let us not condemn them for not pulling their weight, but ask them to indicate that they want to pull their weight and then show them how. It is not going to be easy but it is critical to bringing up the young boys of today that will become young men and then older men who can display those principles of integrity, dignity and respect and act as future role models, because far too often people do as they are taught—they act as they saw others act around them.

I am actively involved in my community and in many organisations that assist young boys, in particular the local cricket, football and surf clubs. A lot of men are there every weekend pulling their weight, acting as role models to other young boys, interacting with the fathers and mothers of those other young boys, and creating a positive experience. Across every suburb, town and regional community all over Western Australia on every single weekend, men are trying to add more to those 10 minutes a day of one-on-one time between a child and a male or a father. Male role models should not be looked at exclusively as father figures. That is the other point I want to add to this debate. A father cannot be replaced, and nor should he. If we see role models solely as father figures, it will become challenging for both men in that role and perhaps their partners, who say, “You are a father to these children here, not to all those children.” We should see them as active, positive male role models.

Sport is a big part of the whole Western Australian community. We see some wonderful male role models in sport. Two very high profile Western Australian sportspeople, Matthew Pavlich and Nic Naitanui, are perfect role models, but we need to move beyond just sport. We need to move across academia, the professions and business and celebrate role models such as Professor Bruce Robinson, Andrew Forrest and David Flanagan—males across the spectrum. Their status should be elevated to show young males that no matter where they start in life, they can do great things and they can maximise their potential in life as men. Kerry Stokes is another role model, and his story about the way he grew up and became a wonderful Western Australian has recently become public. There are lots of good male role models out there; let us capitalise on it and do it, but perhaps along the way ask some young men how it is done. Movember is good. We can poke a bit of fun at it, but, at the end of the day, what is it there to do? It is there to tell men to stop being the rugged individual who can get by without seeing the doctor and to go and get tested when they need to get tested. That is the real message of Movember. Let us not forget it; let us keep plugging away at it. That is what it is about—raising awareness and also raising some funds to do some more research. We have breast cancer research and that is fantastic. Prostate cancer research is just as important and just as good. Let us have a society that treats males and females as equals. We have come a long way. This society does elevate women to the appropriate status that they deserve and require in society, but let us not do that at the expense of men.

I do not have a lot of time left to me today, so I will just say that the idea of a minister for men’s interests challenges me, because people in this place know that I am not about creating new quangos; I am not about creating new government departments, but perhaps it can be done in a very cost-effective or even cost-neutral way. We should also look at simply identifying the fact that young boys today require strong and important male role models. I thank Hon Nick Goiran and I commend the motion to the house.

HON NICK GOIRAN (South Metropolitan) [12.32 pm] — in reply: I am pleased that members took the opportunity to speak on the motion. In particular, I acknowledge the contributions of the Leader of the Opposition and also Hon Liz Behjat, Hon Donna Faragher and Hon Peter Katsambanis. It is a matter that is close

to my heart. If there is any sense of regret on my part, it is that we did not have private members' business yesterday so that the motion could have been moved on International Men's Day. I am very grateful to my colleagues on this side of the house for giving me the opportunity to use private members' business today for this purpose.

As I outlined in the motion, the overwhelming thing that we want to try to do is recognise the contribution of men in Western Australia, to thank them for their contribution and to encourage people to support men in their roles and the contribution that they make in our society.

It is probably useful if I give the last word on this issue to a gentleman I consider to be a hero and who aptly, in my respectful opinion, demonstrates the various characteristics that we have outlined in debate on the motion today. This gentleman is Warwick Marsh and he heads up Dads4Kids Fatherhood Foundation. When I have been around my constituency speaking on this matter in the past, I have said to people as a practical tip that if there is one single thing that they might want to do it is to consider signing up to this free e-newsletter from Warwick Marsh and Dads4Kids Fatherhood Foundation, because it is an excellent read that comes out weekly. Even for the time-poor male in 2014, it would be a worthy investment of their time to spend a few minutes each week considering the various things in that e-newsletter. I want to conclude today by quoting from his editorial from the past weekend. This is what Warwick had to say —

In 1981 I became involved in the men's movement more by accident than by design. That happy "accident" was one of the best things that happened to me. I started going to men's groups, men's weekends and listening to men talk about fatherhood and manhood. I started reading books on manhood, fatherhood, marriage and family. My first son was born in 1981 so it was a good time to start. Having said all that, one of the best parts of being part of the men and fathers movement was meeting really great men who inspired me to even greater levels of manhood and fatherhood.

Such a man is Robert Falzone, the cofounder of 'Men Alive' ... When Rob asked me to review his new book called 'The Father Factor' this is what I had to say about it:

"The Father Factor is a unique, profound and ground-breaking book. Profound because it collates the latest research on the importance of fathers in families, but not just fathers, also mothers, faith and family. Ground-breaking because it also includes personal stories, case studies and gives strategies for success and happiness. Unique because it is fresh and nothing like it has been written before."

I include a short excerpt from The Father Factor here so you can make your own judgement:

"The father factor is also a gatekeeper for the other key factors (That help people grow up and become successful). Humans imbibe foundational relationship skills during the early years of life when the father and mother have enormous influence. For better or worse, fathers really do affect their children's relationships. The teen pregnancy rate in New Zealand and America, for example, has been found to be about 7 to 8 times higher in early father absent families than in father present families. The rate is about 2 to 3 times higher in late father absent families ..."

He then refers to the study of Ellis in 2003. He goes on —

The father factor also impacts on the addiction factor. A Swedish study found that girls from single parent families were more than 3 times as likely to die from an addiction to drugs or alcohol as girls from two parent families. Swedish boys from single parent families were found to be about 5 times as likely to die from an addiction to drugs or alcohol as those in two parent families ...

He then refers to another 2003 study. He goes on to say —

The father factor even impacts on the mother factor. An involved and loving father shares the parenting duties. This kind of responsible sharing helps the mother to be a more effective parent ...

He then refers to two studies in 1998 and 1993. He goes on —

The social science research on the importance of fathers is now firmly positioned and convincing—children do better by almost every common social indicator when they have an involved, loving, and nurturing relationship with both a father and a mother ...

He then refers to studies in 1994 and 2007. He goes on —

Conversely, they tend to do worse in life when they have no fathering or very bad fathering ...

He then refers to a study in 2003. He goes on —

The father factor impacts powerfully not only on sons, daughters and mothers—it also impacts on society as a whole.

Studies in the US have shown that the percentage of fatherless youth in a neighbourhood is one of the best predictors of crime rates for that neighbourhood ..."

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL — Thursday, 20 November 2014]

p8456b-8464a

Hon Nick Goiran; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Liz Behjat; Hon Donna Faragher; Hon Peter Katsambanis

...

“Based on evidence, data and the insights provided by pertinent case studies, this book will argue that fathers and father-child relationships matter. The influence of fathers forms an indelible impact and impression of the lives of children. Good fathering grows healthy children, it fosters stable marriages and it forms the scaffolding of a robust and strong society.

The father factor can be either a positive or negative influence in our lives, and it is within our power to make it a positive one. If we forego anger towards our fathers for their failings, and if we express gratitude for the contribution they made to our lives, we unlock a door which leads to a happier life ...

That is also referring to a 2004 study. The article continues —

This is the father factor. It is real, it is relevant, and it is destiny shaping.”

Warwick Marsh goes on in his editorial to conclude by saying —

Yes, as a father you are the single biggest factor in your children’s success or failure. That is why you are reading this newsletter. Trust me you are making a difference. Just keep on keeping on. As Tim Hansel said, *“It takes time to be a good father. It takes effort-trying, failing, and trying again.”*

Yours for destiny-shaping fathers

Warwick Marsh

As I conclude, I once again thank members for their support and contribution to the motion.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.