

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY — MERREDIN

Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Opposition) [12.50 pm]: On Saturday, I attended the fifth Merredin International Women’s Day event hosted at the historic Cummins Theatre. Congratulations to Kerry Kretschmer, the driving force behind this annual event, and all those involved in bringing it together. Emceed by talented local Verity Hughes, we heard from two inspirational women: Claire O’Brien-Smith and Sam Retallack. It was a great pleasure to speak alongside them and offer an insight on my role as the Leader of the Opposition in Western Australia.

Claire is an ultramarathon runner and adventure racer, balancing these pursuits against a career in public health. In 2021, Claire completed the 130-kilometre Cape to Cape Track, unsupported, in just 18 hours and 30 minutes—a new record. She spoke of the importance of goal-setting, and her approach to succeeding in a male-dominated sport.

Sam is the head of people and culture for IGO Ltd, and has over 25 years’ experience in senior management, human resources and operational roles. She spoke about her career in retail and domestic aviation before turning to roles in human resource management across the mining, finance, legal and biomedical sectors.

These women, like many others, have succeeded despite, or perhaps sometimes in spite of, the bias, stereotyping and discrimination many face on a daily basis. Whether it is unconscious bias or outright discrimination, we all have a responsibility to call it out in our workplaces and communities. Honest and open conversations in forums like those held to mark International Women’s Day are an important reminder that we have more to do for the girls and women of future generations.