

FORRESTFIELD FUTURE WOMEN LEADERS

Statement by Member for Forrestfield

MR N.W. MORTON (Forrestfield) [12.49 pm]: In anticipation of International Women's Day I held the inaugural Forrestfield Future Women Leaders' luncheon at Parliament House on Wednesday, 4 March 2015. I was joined by special guest Hon Liza Harvey, MLA, Minister for Women's Interests, who chatted with young women leaders from Kalamunda Senior High School and Darling Range Sports College about the challenges of being a leader and what it takes to succeed in the modern world. Upon their arrival to Parliament, the minister and I took the students into the chamber and offered them the opportunity to sit in the very same seats now occupied by ministers and the Premier. Over lunch, I, the girls and the minister had a lively discussion about politics, working in Parliament and the challenges of leadership. We also heard from the students about their roles as leaders in their school communities and the challenges they face. Although women may numerically represent half of today's workforce, they are nowhere near equally represented in positions of power and leadership. This discrepancy is not just bad for women—it is bad for business. Women are under-represented at all levels of leadership, but the absence of female leaders becomes visible the higher up the corporate ladder we climb. Data consistently suggests that companies with more women in leadership positions perform better than those dominated exclusively by men. Studies have also shown that gender-diversified boards make better business judgements, based on a better representation of consumers and decision-makers. I would like to thank the Minister for Women's Interests for being so generous with her time and her opinions on the day, as well as the staff and students from Darling Range Sports College and Kalamunda Senior High School. They were: Genevieve Hickson; Nahdarin Vahya; Grace Smith; Taylah Duns; Briony Kennedy; Belinda Beatty; Ellie La Monte; and Chloe Redmond. Given the success of this event, I hope it will be the first of many Forrestfield Future Women Leaders' luncheons.