

**STERLING SILVER SINGERS**

*Statement by Member for Morley*

**MR I.M. BRITZA (Morley)** [12.56 pm]: I would like to share with members a choir in my electorate that is not an average choir. The Sterling Silver Singers is a group of seniors who range in age from 66 to 95 years and who meet every Thursday to sing simply for the joy it brings them and the feelings of wellbeing and happiness that go together with that sense of joy. There are no auditions and everybody is welcome, even if people cannot sing or have never tried before. Nicki de Hoog, the director, began the choir in 2007 as part of a study run by the University of Western Australia on the value of singing as an aid to good mental and physical health. Long after the study finished, the group is still flourishing and strong bonds of friendship and support are established and maintained. Due to the fact that there are no musical requirements and that everyone is welcome, there is a very warm, relaxed atmosphere, stimulated by regular jokes and laughter. There are many singing groups in Perth and its surrounding suburbs but there are not many that cater for those over 55 years. Nicki de Hoog, formerly a Department of Education music specialist, views the group as an opportunity for her to develop new skills, make new friends and to help establish a loving, supportive community based around singing and its associated positive health benefits. Although many members are in their 80s, and several into their 90s, they often visit nursing homes to sing and bring joy to the residents. They also have a gala concert each year, which gives them a big goal to work towards. They are an extraordinary group of ordinary seniors, who care for each other in a way that gives their life meaning, purpose and a huge sense of fun and adventure, and they certainly can sing!