

**WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY 2016**

*Statement by Member for Swan Hills*

**MR F.A. ALBAN (Swan Hills)** [12.53 pm]: On Thursday, 24 March, I had the privilege of co-hosting a morning tea on behalf of the Western Australian Parliamentary Friends of People with Disabilities. The occasion was to recognise World Down Syndrome Day 2016, which was first recognised by the United Nations in 2012, and also to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of Down Syndrome WA. Down Syndrome WA has been working tirelessly to support Western Australians with Down syndrome and their families by amplifying their voices and educating those in the community. By delivering information at every stage of life, it has proved an invaluable support while connecting families who share this journey. There was a time when people with disabilities were not given many opportunities and had few rights. That was a time when attitudes to disability were driven by ignorance and fear. Today, a new era has brought about increased recognition of human and civil rights for people with disabilities, and along with that has come access to education and health and a move away from institutional services, and an emphasis on integration and participation in the local community—what we now call inclusion. Today, more people with Down syndrome are independent and contribute to the world around them while living longer and fuller lives. Down Syndrome WA is today an organisation supported by a devoted team of supporters, volunteers and staff who maintain and share the enthusiasm of the people who founded it. We wish them well for the future in achieving successful outcomes for children in their care.