

**BERLIN WALL DISMANTLING — TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

*Statement by Member for Southern River*

**MR P. ABETZ (Southern River)** [12.54 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that the twenty-fifth anniversary of the dismantling of the Berlin Wall will not go uncelebrated in Perth, thanks to the energy and initiative of Mr Achim Burmeister, chief executive officer of the West Australian–German Business Association, with sponsorship from Treffpunkt WA Pty Ltd, and Mr Torsten Ketelsen, managing director of GMA Garnet Group.

It was just past midnight on 12–13 August 1961 when the East German communist government threw up what became known as the Berlin Wall, because over 2.5 million East Germans had fled the communist utopia and gone into West Berlin. Fearful of having no-one left to govern, anyone who tried to cross over the wall was mercilessly shot. The Berlin Wall wound its way through the centre of Berlin and hugged the entire border of West Berlin, cutting off West Berlin from the rest of East Germany. This resulted in many families and neighbours being separated and some 60 000 East Germans no longer being able to go to their well-paying jobs in West Berlin.

To mark the dismantling of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989, a public event will be held at the Northbridge piazza on Sunday, 9 November, starting at 12 noon and running through to 5.00 pm. The play *Dismantling the Walls*, which highlights how individual ethnic communities can separate themselves from each other, will be presented by high school students. They will show how easy it is to dismantle those walls by talking to each other. After the Berlin Wall came down, East and West Germany were reunified into a single German state on 3 October 1990.

I hope that many members will take the time to join in this celebration.