

BELDON PRIMARY SCHOOL — STEPHANIE ALEXANDER KITCHEN GARDEN

Statement by Member for Joondalup

MR A.P. O’GORMAN (Joondalup) [12.51 pm]: The principal of Beldon Education Support Centre, Michele Mason, initially championed the idea of a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden some years ago involving both the Education Support Centre and the Beldon Primary School—an initiative by both schools. Last year in October, Nicola Roxon visited Beldon Primary School to announce the funding for a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden. Money was forwarded this year and the garden is now well and truly established.

Beldon Primary School recently hosted a workshop for 60 to 70 people who have Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Gardens in their schools. Everyone was very pleased with the garden at Beldon. All the Education Support Centre students and years 4 to 7 of the primary school are involved in the garden, taking turns each week to do the jobs that need to be done such as picking the bugs off the plants et cetera. This program also involves the kindergarten and years 1 to 3 students in some way.

The impact has been huge as all students are involved to some extent, as well as most parents and all of the teachers. All year 4 to 7 students have a 40-minute period a week in the garden, and an 80-minute period in the kitchen. After the kitchen lesson, some students have taken parents shopping after school to buy the ingredients and then cooked the family’s evening meal, replicating what they have made in school that day. The parents are amazed that the students will actually eat the vegetables they grow and prepare something that not a lot of students do willingly at home. The two coordinators of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden are Madeline Hutchings and Jo Tyrrell; the “Garden Goddess” is Therese Dodd; and the “Kitchen Goddess” is Stacy Broom. Without these people the program would not run as smoothly as it does. The garden impacts on school spirit and culture. None of the students will be away on the day it is their turn in the garden. The school would very much like to have the junior school more involved but it is costly to pay for teachers et cetera.