

CHILDREN IN CARE — ABUSE — *UNFOLDING LIVES* SCULPTURE

Statement by Minister for Child Protection

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Child Protection) [9.32 am]: Earlier this week, with the Attorney General, I had the great privilege of participating in a ceremony to rededicate Western Australia’s *Unfolding Lives* sculpture. The sculpture, also known as the “chatterbox”, honours the forgotten Australians—those children who sadly experienced harm in state care. It is our state’s first memorial to acknowledge these children and their terrible experiences, and was originally unveiled at the Perth Cultural Centre in 2010. It was removed and stored during the Western Australian Museum’s redevelopment and now has a permanent place in the Perth Cultural Centre precinct outside the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip. The thought-provoking sculpture was inspired by a child’s paper chatterbox and holds deep significance to the community it represents. I am so pleased that the memorial has been restored and can again serve as a reminder of the experiences of the victim–survivors who were so terribly harmed in the institutions that were meant to care for them.

I acknowledge my colleagues the Attorney General, Hon John Quigley, and Minister Templeman; the Department of Justice, including the Office of the Commissioner for Victims of Crime; the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; the Department of Communities; and the City of Perth, which worked to have this significant memorial restored. Most importantly, I would like to thank the victim–survivors and recognise their fierce advocacy for the reinstatement of this important memorial, and for generously sharing their time and stories about their experiences and their hopes for children in out-of-home care today.

The safety and wellbeing of children is of utmost importance. Children deserve to grow up in a safe and supportive environment. Today, we are committed to that for children in care, including through our work on initiatives like implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Home Stretch program. Tragically, that was not the case for thousands of children who grew up in institutional or out-of-home care over the last 100 years. Many of these children experienced abuse, neglect and exploitation and have suffered long-term trauma from their time in care. These children, now adults, and known as the forgotten Australians, are honoured again through the rededication of this significant memorial. I encourage all members when they are next in the Perth Cultural Centre precinct to seek out the memorial and pay tribute to these incredible victim–survivors.