

MILLENNIUM KIDS

Statement by Minister for the Environment

MRS EDWARDES (Kingsley - Minister for the Environment) [2.02 pm]: I inform the House that I have received the latest list of the Millennium Kids “Youth Challenges on the Environment”. For the past six years, this outstanding group of Western Australian students has been involved in spreading a positive environmental message throughout the community. They have consistently raised and discussed issues of current and future importance. Their contribution to the wider environmental debate is significant, especially when one considers that these young people of today will be the community leaders of tomorrow.

It is a measure of their involvement that their recent fifth environmental conference attracted more than 150 delegates, including student representatives from Ghana, South Africa, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, and a number of adults. During that conference they debated a broad range of local and global environmental issues and discussed possible solutions. The committee of young people who organised the conference deserves our thanks, especially the enthusiastic organiser, Catrina-Luz Aniere. They were helped by sponsors who acknowledge the need to protect and conserve our environment - Alcoa of Australia Ltd, the City of South Perth, the Broadwater Pagoda Hotel, Perth and Clean Up Australia. As usual, they had the continuing support of the member for South Perth, who has been their patron since the inception of this movement and has been keenly interested in the environment for many years.

The Millennium Kids Youth Challenges on the Environment 2000 apply to national, state and local governments and to every person. Apart from the issues of alternative energy, native animals and tree planting, they have given every one of us a common challenge - to be environmentally friendly in our own lives and to encourage others to do the same. They have backed this challenge with four separate challenges on rubbish and recycling, which demonstrate the depth of their concern on this particular issue.

The Millennium Kids are showing the way by being proactive in raising and discussing issues and in seeking solutions. The Government welcomes and applauds their contribution to the environmental debate and urges them to maintain their enthusiasm. Their rewards will come when their voices help convince the entire community that protecting the environment is our collective responsibility.

I table the Millennium Kids Youth Challenges on the Environment 2000.

[See paper No 469.]