

TIMOTHY WILLOCK

Statement by Member for Yokine

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine) [1.01 pm]: Last weekend I attended the eighteenth birthday party of a young man in my electorate named Timothy Willock. It was the usual Sunday lunchtime barbeque put on by his mum Judy, cooked by dad David, and with his sister Beckie fussing around to make sure we were all fed and watered. His proud grandparents were the life and soul of the party, as well as a bevy of aunts, uncles, friends and people who care about and love him, just like all 18-year-old boys. It was not a remarkable event people might say, but Tim is a very special person. He suffers from a rare genetic condition known as fragile X. Since birth he has been profoundly disabled, not physically, but his intellectual development is such that he will forever live in a permanent childhood. I first met Tim shortly after I entered Parliament, when he and his family adopted me as their politician Uncle Bob under the “adopt a politician” scheme. His parents have been amazing advocates for the intellectually disabled ever since Judy was given the chilling news by her specialist doctor that changed her family’s lifestyle forever. The day-to-day challenges that family has faced would daunt even the most patient of us. However, they have persisted and that young man, who may never know the love that surrounds him, has been guaranteed a life within his own little world because of their efforts. I was privileged when Minister for Disability Services to make a contribution, but that pales into nothing when one experiences the enormous contribution that Judy, David, Beckie, Poppy, Merle and so many others have made to ensure his coming of age. Tim is now in supported accommodation living with carers. His family have back a little of the life they sacrificed to see him grow. I commend the “adopt a politician” scheme to all members. It is wonderful to see him settled as he achieved his milestone. Happy eighteenth birthday, Tim; we are all very proud of you.

Sitting suspended from 1.03 to 2.00 pm