

**COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA — 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

*Statement by Member for Central Wheatbelt*

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt)** [12.58 pm]: I rise with great pleasure to mark an auspicious occasion for one of our most important and influential organisations advocating and supporting women in our state. This year the Country Women's Association of Western Australia turns 100. As a proud member, along with a number of my family members going back generations, it gives me great pleasure to stand and congratulate all those who have been involved in this wonderful organisation. The very first regional branch of the CWA of WA was set up in Nungarin, in my electorate of Central Wheatbelt. The very first purpose-built CWA rest room was built in Bandee between the towns of Kellerberrin and Merredin, which is also in my electorate. CWA was formed to meet the needs of the time, which was to help women in isolated rural communities and to provide a voice to government to seek solutions to the difficulties facing families, particularly in those areas. It has stood the test of time, holding true to its values and enriching the lives of regional women and their families.

Their work is important because it empowers women. They campaign for issues they believe in using a mixture of soft and hard diplomacy to make their point, persuading the political echelon to change or introduce new policy, fundraising to support a cause and generating a network of friends and colleagues to rally around those who need assistance. They make friends and learn skills that have seen our families through the toughest of times, celebrations and everyday life. Confident, articulate women with a purpose are a force to be reckoned with. We need more, not less, of the values and ethos of the Country Women's Association in our world. In its own practical and pragmatic way, CWA has created a space for women to build their skills and confidence for 100 years, and it is truly a privilege to count myself as a member. I wish the CWA a very happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and congratulate the CWA on the launch of its book *Celebrating 100 special women* and I look forward to joining with various branches throughout the year to celebrate this remarkable milestone. Happy 100<sup>th</sup> birthday to the CWA.