

PETER DARCH — WA 2011 YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR

Statement by Member for Mandurah

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [12.51 pm]: I rise in this Parliament to congratulate Mandurah resident Peter Darch who, on Saturday evening at the WA Youth Awards, was not only announced as Western Australia's 2011 Most Outstanding Youth Worker of the Year, but also confirmed as Western Australia's 2011 Young Person of the Year.

A number of years ago Peter had an accident that resulted in him being confined to a wheelchair. Despite the accident and the intensive therapy following, Peter has been an inspirational young man to our local community and an amazing role model for young people in the Peel region. Peter Darch has approached life post his accident with an amazing determination. With the tremendous support of his mother and father, his brothers, his wife, his extended family and his extensive network of friends, Peter has made a real difference to my community. He has been a passionate advocate for young people and people with disabilities. He has established some excellent programs through his role as a youth development officer working out of the Billy Dower Youth Centre in Mandurah. Peter is a well-known and much-loved member of our community, along with his trusty dog Phoebe, and enjoys a very high profile in Mandurah. However, Peter's employment remains at risk and Peter is fighting to have the federal government recognise his Access to Employment scheme, an employment support model that he developed two years ago. This proposed model will not result in additional cost to taxpayers and will provide sustainable support for all profoundly disabled individuals to be employed full time.

I believe that the federal government needs to listen to our Young Person of the Year, Peter Darch. He has a sustainable employment plan that will work; it is a plan that will provide ongoing support for people with disabilities to continue to be employed and to ensure that outstanding people like Peter can continue to make a fantastic contribution to their community. The people of Mandurah are proud of Peter Darch and thrilled that one of our young people is the 2011 Young Person of the Year.