

FREMANTLE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Statement by Member for Fremantle

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle) [12.52 pm]: I rise this afternoon to acknowledge the work of the volunteers in the Fremantle office of the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Fremantle CAB was founded in 1965 and last year 20 volunteers received more than 4 000 calls for help, particularly from low-income workers, migrants and the elderly. Pat Baxter, a veteran volunteer at the bureau of over eight years and former coordinator, is one of the key people from the bureau I have had the pleasure of coming into contact with. People like Pat provide accessible advice to members of the broader Fremantle community. I met Pat late last year when the Fremantle volunteers were advised by the Perth office that a number of items that they have been assisting clients with for years could no longer be done, primarily because of inadequate professional insurance cover. The Fremantle volunteers objected and argued that without the CAB offering assistance, scores of ordinary people would be without advice. Six months later, commonsense has prevailed and, due to the passionate advocacy of CAB volunteers, the full suite of advice services continues at the Fremantle office of the CAB.

Work volunteers have been doing in that time includes assistance with probate; correspondence on behalf of clients; facilitating low-cost wills; filling in forms on behalf of clients; and assistance with tax returns. The work that has been done at the bureau has ensured that, for many people, administrative procedures and basic legal processes are explained and made accessible, and those people are thereby able to receive reliable advice and entitlements that might otherwise have been denied. They should be applauded for their commitment and their work.