

WOMEN IN ICT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION — PARLIAMENT HOUSE EVENT

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [12.20 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the women in ICT diversity and inclusion event held last week at Parliament House. The Minister for Innovation and ICT; Science, Hon Dave Kelly, MLA, and I partnered with the Australian Computer Society for this event. We invited members of the Australian Computer Society working in ICT to join members of Parliament to talk about diversity in their industry. The invitees are champions in their field of work who are passionate about change and want to do something about improving gender equality. We wanted to spark a conversation about how to ensure that the science, technology, engineering and mathematics, or STEM, sectors are inclusive and embrace diversity. We recognise that getting more women and girls into the traditionally male-dominated fields of STEM requires a whole of community effort.

What better way to move forward with this goal than to ask those in the sector about its strengths and its weaknesses, so that is exactly what we did. We invited attendees to record a short video of themselves to tell us in 30 seconds what they love about their industry and what needs to change. Engineers, software developers, digital collaboration specialists and coders shared their insights with us. They spoke of mentors and role models, workplace flexibility and leadership, and the need to educate everyone, not just children, about the sheer diversity of opportunities that lie within these growing sectors. We heard about the conversations parents have with their children, the passionate teachers who inspire kids in school, and the role models in industry who carve a path for those who will follow. We will continue this dialogue to ask women about what is working and what is not, in developing industries and workplaces that embrace gender equality, because gender equality benefits everyone. The state government congratulates the Australian Computer Society for its commitment to diversity in the ICT sector.