

GIRLS TAKEOVER PARLIAMENT

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [9.13 am]: I rise to speak about Girls Takeover Parliament, an event that is happening around the country today, the International Day of the Girl Child. Almost 20 members of Parliament, from all sides and across both chambers, are today hosting a young woman or girl to offer them an insight into political life. These girls, many of whom are joining us this morning in the public gallery, will gain a unique opportunity to shadow a parliamentarian. The girls will be co-chairing meetings, attending events, writing briefings and speeches, and learning more about the way Parliament operates. In opening the door to the way Parliament works, we invite the next generation of female leaders to consider a career in politics. Perhaps more importantly, Girls Takeover Parliament will give those members participating, including myself, the opportunity to hear the voices of young women and to listen to their hopes and aspirations and their concerns, and allow us to better serve our communities and plan for the future.

Girls Takeover Parliament demonstrates our commitment to gender equality and lays the foundations to get more women into our Parliaments. The fortieth Parliament of Western Australia comprises a total of 30 women across both houses, representing around 31 per cent of the seats. This figure has been achieved through dedicated and focused efforts to ensure that women are supported to overcome the barriers they often encounter in their pursuit of leadership roles. There is obviously a lot of room for improvement. Our Parliament should look like our community and we must achieve parity. Today, girls taking over Parliament is a good start. We are sending a message that women and girls are welcome in this place and that the future for leadership is one of equality and diversity. I take this opportunity to welcome the girls participating and wish them the best for the day.