

WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA — FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [12.03 pm]: I rise to inform the house of a milestone in Western Australia's arts and culture community of which we should all be proud. This year marks the fiftieth year of operations of one of the state's most cherished arts institutions, the West Australian Opera. Established in 1967, it has entertained and captivated audiences in Perth and around WA, staging 158 opera seasons with more than 1 000 singers and performing to hundreds of thousands of Western Australians. As one of the oldest opera companies in Australia and WA's only full-time, professional opera company, it provides jobs for a stream of talented singers, actors, dancers, chorus members, musicians, conductors, directors and designers. It kicked off its golden anniversary with the special Opera in the Park performance, staged in the grounds of Supreme Court Gardens and simulcast to people all around Western Australia. This year, smaller gala concerts are being presented in iconic Western Australian venues with four singers and piano in Opera in the Pinnacles, Opera in Greenough, Opera in the Valley of the Giants, and beyond.

Based at His Majesty's Theatre, the company has staged world-class operas, premiered revolutionary new works, and mentored talented young people who have gone on to have successful international careers. Guided by a board of directors chaired by Terry Bowen, general manager Carolyn Chard and artistic director Brad Cohen, the company receives funding and support from the state government through our Department of Culture and the Arts and Lotterywest, from the federal government through the Australia Council for the Arts, and through its principal partner Wesfarmers Arts.

The McGowan government is proud of the West Australian Opera and celebrates its efforts over the past 50 years. It is a remarkable organisation that has had a major impact on the arts in Western Australia and it is a prized part of our arts and culture community.