

**WA FOSTER CARERS WEEK**

*Statement by Minister for Child Protection*

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection)** [12.13 pm]: Today I rise, in acknowledgment of WA Foster Carers Week, to thank the many foster, family and kinship carers across the community who often go without recognition or praise. Foster carers are the foundation of any care system. When a carer steps into the life of a child in care, they provide them with safety and stability. They provide them with a nurturing home where they have an opportunity to thrive. The third annual WA Foster Carers Week, held from 12–18 March, is an important time to pause, reflect and acknowledge the significant contribution made by carers. As at 31 January 2019, there were 2 043 foster carer households in Western Australia with 5 262 children in care.

Local events occurred in regional and remote areas across the state to highlight the impact these carers have on children's lives. I was particularly pleased to host an event last Sunday with 250 guests, including foster and family carers, Department of Communities staff and representatives from the non-government sector. I was also pleased to acknowledge Fay Alford at the event, and the Foster Care Association of WA. This year Fay celebrates 40 years of providing advocacy and support. Talking to carers like Fay Alford and others at the event reminded me of a very important value that I share in common with foster carers, and I would think members of this place do too. We are all committed to ensuring the safety of children, and supporting them to reach their full potential despite any obstacles in their way. On behalf of the McGowan government, today in this place, I would simply like to say thank you to all carers. I hope to meet with many carers over the coming 12 months as I travel around the state, to pass on my thanks in person.