

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [9.07 am]: I rise to inform the house about Child Australia's Early Childhood Learning and Development Conference that I had the pleasure of attending last weekend. Over 1 000 delegates, representing community sector agencies, early childhood education and care providers, and government agencies delivering early years services, attended over three days. The conference included international and national keynote speakers, alongside practical workshops for thought leaders, educators, academics, allied health professionals and other practitioners working with children. Child Australia established this conference in 2007 to advance three primary goals: to build the capacity of professionals within the education and care sector; to promote high quality education and care for children; and to improve the learning and developmental outcomes of Australian children.

Child Australia last hosted this biennial conference in March 2017. This is Western Australia's largest gathering of professionals supporting education and development of young children. Keynote presentations were made by a range of experts in their fields, including Dr Louis Cozolino, a leading child neurodevelopment specialist from the US, and Dr Nat Kendall-Taylor, CEO of the FrameWorks Institute. Local experts also presented at the conference, including representatives from CoLab, Playgroup WA and the State Library of Western Australia. Promoting the importance of the early years within the early childhood education and care sector is crucial. The McGowan government recognises how important it is to support children in the vital early years to set the foundations for their future development. That is why the Premier announced "Our Priorities: Sharing Prosperity" last month. One of the most important targets in the early years is to increase the number of children in WA who are developmentally on track when they start school. Building on the quality services being provided to young children and families is of the utmost importance if we want to give our youngest Western Australians the best start in life. I commend Child Australia for its ongoing commitment to early childhood development.