

WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA — NINETIETH ANNIVERSARY

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [9.04 am]: I rise to inform the house of a special milestone in Western Australia's arts and culture community, of which we should all be very proud. This year marks the ninetieth anniversary season of the state's largest performing arts organisation, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, or WASO as it is affectionately known. It was my pleasure to attend the launch of WASO's ninetieth anniversary season, with a concert of WASO favourites at the Perth Concert Hall on Friday, 9 February. I must say there was resounding applause for a magnificent rendition of those classics. WASO is one of our state's cultural gems. It is cherished as one of Australia's finest orchestras and renowned internationally for its dynamic performances under the principal conductor, Asher Fisch. Over the past 90 years, WASO's contribution to the cultural vibrancy of Western Australia has been remarkable, creating cultural employment and having social and economic impact on a significant scale.

WASO's resident company of 75 full-time and additional part-time professional musicians performs more than 175 concerts annually to an audience of more than 190 000 people each year. The company also provides orchestral pit services for the West Australian Opera and West Australian Ballet companies across the year. In total, the company provides employment for 337 artists, creatives and technical and support workers a year, which is equivalent to 128 full-time equivalent jobs. Guided by a board of directors chaired by Janet Holmes à Court, AC, the company receives funding and support from the state government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, and Lotterywest; federally from the Australia Council; and through its principal partner, Wesfarmers Arts. WASO is highly regarded for having the broadest and deepest community engagement program of any orchestra in the country. WASO is dedicated to taking its performances to the regional and remote areas of Western Australia, with concerts also recorded and broadcast throughout Australia and streamed around the world.

In this ninetieth anniversary season, Western Australian audiences will be treated to a rich and dynamic program, from the signature works of the Masters and Classics Series to the highly attended Pops Series. This year there will be concerts featuring jazz legend James Morrison and Circus Oz. This year's special events include concerts with Western Australia's own Eskimo Joe; Katie Noonan's trio, Elixir, with Michael Leunig; and a special performance alongside the screening of *Star Wars: A New Hope*, which is one that I am sure will delight fans both old and young—and the member for Perth. We should all be proud of WASO and its successes over the past 90 years. It is a remarkable organisation that delivers significant social and economic impact for Western Australia and provides joy to the hearts of the Western Australian community.