

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE — ELIMINATION**

*Statement by Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence*

**MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence)** [9.12 am]: I rise to speak about 16 Days in WA to Stop Violence Against Women. Starting this Saturday, our state will turn orange in support of international efforts to “orange the world”—to end violence against women and girls. The United Nations’ International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is on 25 November. For the first time in this state’s history, the government calls on parliamentarians, the WA public and community and business leaders throughout the state to stop violence against women.

Last Friday I took part in the twenty-seventh Annual Silent Domestic Violence Memorial March in the Perth CBD. A small group of women survivors of domestic violence first gathered in 1991. Almost 30 years on, I joined with hundreds of supporters to mark this occasion and honour those lives lost to this scourge in our communities in the last 12 months. Since last year’s march, some very young lives, including a six-month-old, and those in their more mature years have been killed at the hands of those who are meant to love and nurture them. This is unacceptable and is the message that we as a community must keep taking up, especially in the face of murders and maiming. The march was organised by the Women’s Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA. I congratulate it for another great community event. I also congratulate it for keeping us focused throughout the other 364 days of the year on keeping women safe and, just as importantly, giving them hope. This memorial march day organised by the women’s council was joined by many other community organisations, including women’s organisations, working hard to give women and children options for leaving violence. It is often police and family and domestic violence services that respond in a crisis. It is often difficult work. The government and the community value the work that they do.

The memorial march is also an opportunity for others to get involved, particularly those who may not think they have a role to play in the day-to-day response. In the days leading up to the march I was particularly heartened to receive an email from the chair of the WA Branch of the Australian Computer Society. He wrote —

While clearly domestic violence is not a primary area of focus for the Australian Computer Society, the Society as a whole, from the National President ... down supports the elimination of this scourge on our society. Accordingly, at our WA Branch Executive Committee meeting last night, we agreed that members of the Executive would take part in next Friday’s (17<sup>th</sup>) Silent Domestic Violence Memorial March ...

And take part they did, wearing their organisation’s T-shirts to clearly show the society’s support. What a great thing. It is a clear demonstration that everyone has a responsibility to stop family and domestic violence in this state. This is what 16 Days in WA is all about; it is an opportunity to raise awareness, to recognise those first responders and services working to keep victims safe and hold perpetrators to account, and an opportunity to change the conversation in our homes, communities and workplaces to end violence against women. I look forward to those in this place joining in for 16 days of activism to stop violence against women. Wear orange to show your support. All women and children in our state—indeed, everyone—should be able to live free of violence.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, minister, but everyone has an allotted time. You went about two minutes over.