

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Statement by Minister for Local Government

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Local Government) [2.04 pm]: Two weeks ago, I stood in the house and encouraged ratepayers to have their say in the 2017 local government elections. I encouraged women, young people and people from diverse backgrounds to put up their hands to represent their communities and become part of their local governments that play a vital role in the delivery of services and the creation of engaged and vibrant communities throughout Western Australia.

There was greater encouragement of voter turnout. So far, the statistics show a seven per cent increase in voter turnout. This increase represents the results of a combined effort from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, the Western Australian Electoral Commission and the Western Australian Local Government Association, as well as the many councils that promoted their elections locally. I am pleased with the increase in voter turnout. I am more pleased with the increase in the number of women who have been elected. In 2017, local government elections have, to date, seen a 12.8 per cent increase in the number of women elected. In 2013, 358 women were elected. In 2015, 398 women were elected. This year, 449 women have been elected—which is a terrific result.

This year, we had one of the largest fields of candidates. I am encouraged that so many local people were keen to become active participants in local government and in their communities. The greater the diversity of our elected members, the greater the contribution to a higher standard of community representation and to the effective governance that communities deserve.

I would like to wish all newly elected and re-elected members a very successful term representing their communities. Congratulations to all those elected as mayors and deputy mayors. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by those who have retired from or who were not returned to local government at this election. In particular, I would like to acknowledge one special former elected member, Elsia Archer, from the Shire of Derby–West Kimberley. Elsia retired at this election. Elsia made a remarkable contribution to her community, serving on council since 1989, with only a one-year break due to the death of her husband. She was president from 2001 until 2017. Elsia has been tireless in her commitment to her community. I would like to wish Elsia and those other long-serving members all the very best on their retirement from local government.