

JOHN CURTIN MEDAL

Statement by Minister for Child Protection

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [12.07 pm]: I was honoured to attend the annual John Curtin Medal presentation earlier this month, which is Curtin University's highest non-academic award. Named after the former Australian Prime Minister, the award recognises people who have made a significant contribution in their chosen field and those who have exhibited John Curtin's qualities of vision, leadership and community service.

Since its inception, 43 awards have been presented, including the two at this year's presentation. I want to congratulate this year's recipients, Susan Saleeba and Fay Alford. Fay is someone I know well due to her work in child protection. Having herself been a child in care, Fay gained a strong knowledge of, commitment to and vision about improving child protection, which she has pursued throughout a lifelong career in foster care. For more than 35 years, Fay Alford has dedicated her life to Western Australian children and families in need of foster care and advocacy services. As the director of the Foster Care Association WA, through ministerial advisory positions and ongoing work with departments, Fay has contributed significantly to government policy. In addition to her significant advocacy work, Fay and her husband, David, have welcomed more than 90 children into their home over the past three decades, while raising their own biological daughters. Fay and David have also adopted three foster children. Martika, who arrived as an emergency two-week placement at the age of ten months and went on to become one of Fay's adopted daughters, best summarises Fay's commitment. Martika says of Fay —

She has always loved me and everyone unconditionally. She is the most caring, loving, giving person I think I have ever met in my whole life. She is my hero.

I not only congratulate Fay, who is a most worthy recipient of the John Curtin Medal, but also take this opportunity to thank her and her husband, David, for the love and care that they have provided to countless Western Australian children.