

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MARITIME MUSEUM — EXHIBITIONS

Statement by Minister for Culture and the Arts

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for Culture and the Arts) [9.09 am]: I rise to inform the house of something that all Western Australians should know about, but probably too few of us do. Last week, I attended the official opening of two remarkable exhibitions at the Western Australian Maritime Museum in Fremantle that focuses on the role of early French explorers in helping put Western Australia on the world map. Not everyone is aware that the French played an important part in discovering and mapping our shores, and they named hundreds of landmarks as a reminder of their work.

The first exhibition, *The Art of Science: Baudin's Voyagers 1800–1804*, presents exquisite paintings and drawings from Nicolas Baudin's expedition to Australia from 1800 to 1804. The exhibition includes some of the first European portraits of Aboriginal people and some of the earliest European views of Australian plants and animals. They are remarkable works of art, some from the Museum of Natural History in Le Havre, France, as well as from local partners such as the Kerry Stokes collection. As well as checking out our continent as a potential colony, these French explorers had another purpose: to collect scientific specimens of plants and animals that were unknown on the other side of the world. As a result, they collected more than 180 000 specimens of unique plants and animals from our shores and took them back to France. The second exhibition, *Return to Australia: Freycinet 1818*, centres on Louis de Freycinet's scientific expedition and marks the 200th anniversary of his return to Shark Bay on 12 September 1818. It also tells the remarkable story of Rose de Freycinet, who stowed away aboard her husband's ship, becoming the second woman to circumnavigate the world and the first to complete a written account, with her journal featured in the exhibition.

I commend both these exhibitions; they are an important part of our culture and emphasise the strong relationships we have with France. I congratulate CEO Alec Coles and staff at the WA Museum who made this all possible. I encourage all Western Australians and family members to visit the Maritime Museum in Fremantle and see these exhibitions.