

AMY ASTILL

Statement

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral) [6.05 pm]: I rise tonight to give a statement that should give members hope that the world is in safe hands with our next generation of future leaders. I have always been keen to engage with youth and provide opportunities to those with less experience than I have, whether it be in this or my previous jobs, by taking part in youth committees and events to build the knowledge and skills of young people. However, I have never been in a position to support a young person through my employment until now.

At the beginning of 2018, I was proud to be able to take on a young person in my office in Kalgoorlie–Boulder for an informal internship. I met this young woman nearly two years ago and have continued to be impressed with her work ethic and drive ever since. Amy Astill is a young person who has lived in Kalgoorlie–Boulder for 17 of her 18 years and has been very dedicated to not only her school studies, but also her community. I am happy to say that Amy is here today visiting the halls of Parliament after completing her year 12 exams and, I am sure, having done very well, after receiving four subject awards from John Paul College, as well as a special character award.

When I first met Amy, I had initially read an article in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* about her work as the youth mayor for the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder. Amy had organised a donation to the local foodbank and I thought it was great that she had so much initiative. We knew through mutual friends and contacts in Kalgoorlie that Amy was very interested in government, and so we asked her whether she would like to come in for a meeting. I was very impressed—Amy was very inquisitive and keen to learn. She already had so many projects on the go and, considering she was only 16 years old, had a lot of experience in organising grassroots fundraising and completing projects. Amy was very deserving of her role as youth mayor, and I have seen her flourish in that role over her years of service, attending many events and meetings and engaging young people in the goldfields. She gained many skills through this role, including excellent communication skills such as public speaking and engaging with media to bring youth issues to the forefront in Kalgoorlie–Boulder.

Amy was pretty quiet when I first met her—she is definitely not now!—and she asked me whether she was able to intern with my electorate staff at my office to help her to learn and understand politics. To be honest, I was shocked—I had a 16-year-old telling me that she was interested in politics and wanted to learn more! But after I got over that, of course, I accepted.

During her year 11 studies, Amy came in about once a week for two hours on a Wednesday afternoon, as the last school period of that day was politics and law class and her teacher felt it was important to let Amy have the opportunity to be in an electorate office. Amy learnt a lot from my electorate officer George. Over time, Amy's confidence has grown, and her knowledge of state government and the Western Australian Parliament has expanded too.

Earlier this year, Amy was told about an opportunity with the Country to Canberra team to visit Kalgoorlie–Boulder to teach an empowerment workshop for high school–aged girls. Unfortunately, no-one would host the workshop in Kalgoorlie and Amy was devastated that her peers would miss out on this fantastic opportunity to learn. Knowing how much of an impact the Country to Canberra team makes, having attended her own trip in 2017, Amy worked with George to round up sponsorship from local mining companies and businesses for the workshop. She asked me whether she could host the workshop in my office and she helped to get it all organised, running the event pretty much by herself. I was extremely impressed by her efforts to get this work done. In the end, 15 young women attended the all-day workshop and had an amazing time learning about gender equality and leadership and supporting each other.

Since that workshop, Amy has also gained part-time employment at the Museum of the Goldfields, attended the UWA Fogarty Futures Leadership Conference and was a finalist in the WA Youth Awards for the Commissioner for Children and Young People. Amy also founded the John Paul College mentoring program for incoming year 7s and was co-master of ceremonies at the Community Cabinet event held in Kalgoorlie–Boulder. I was lucky to attend one of the mentoring sessions and saw Amy running around telling everyone what to do. It was very well organised and the opportunity for year 7s to be paired up with year 12s is a big step. The program that is being run by Amy is absolutely amazing.

I am very proud of Amy's work and I hope her work inspires other members to have confidence in the future of this state. I encourage other members to support and empower young people in their electorates wherever possible, to help them achieve their goals and dreams. I wish Amy all the best in her future endeavours. She has a very bright future ahead.