

ROTTNEST CHANNEL SWIM

Statement by Member for Cottesloe

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mrs L.A. Munday): Member for Cottesloe, I see that you are seeking the call. You have the call.

DR D.J. HONEY (Cottesloe — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.58 pm]: Thank you very much, Acting Speaker. On Saturday morning, 2 300 eager swimmers are expected to descend on Cottesloe Beach, waiting with some excitement, and I imagine a lot of nerves, to start the internationally acknowledged 19.7-kilometre open water Rottnest Channel Swim to Thomson Bay. Starting from humble beginnings, the first ever Rottnest Channel Swim was held in 1991 with just 44 entrants. Only seven years later, the event had eclipsed all competitors to become the world's largest open water swimming competition, a title it continues to hold today. The swim has become such a landmark competition that a virtual Rottnest Channel Swim was created in 2009. This has meant that despite safety caps on the number of swimmers who can compete in the race in person, thousands more have been able to challenge themselves by replicating the race in pools from Seville Grove to Seoul, South Korea. The event would not be what it is today without the training and dedication of the swimmers and their support crews, whether they are looking to raise money for a charity close to their heart or as a competitive swimmer. I wish all swimmers the best of luck in completing this iconic event. Fingers crossed that this year's Rottnest Channel Swim will see all swimmers able to finish the race under the cut-off. I thank Nic Blackburn and his committee for the excellent work they do in organising the race.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm