

**PERTH INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL**

*Statement by Member for Perth*

**MS WARNOCK** (Perth) [12.50 pm]: Earlier this morning I attended the launch of the poster for the 2001 Perth International Arts Festival, the traditional “teaser” or first taste of the following summer’s arts festival program. The 2001 festival - the forty-eighth in an annual series, which makes it Australia’s longest running and largest multi-arts festival - will open on Australia Day with music, dancing and fireworks. It will continue for three weeks with a vast range of arts and entertainments - many of them free - performed by both international and local artists. It is no secret that of late the festival has had its problems - as have the Eagles, as someone pointed out this morning. The new director, Sean Doran, with great ambitions for this long-running and important event, put on a very high quality and well-attended festival last summer. However, the festival sponsor, the University of Western Australia, had to pick up a big cost overrun. The university is determined to continue strongly backing the festival. The City of Perth and the Lotteries Commission will continue to do the same. In our isolated corner of the world, the Perth International Arts Festival is a hugely important feature of this State’s cultural landscape, and has been for almost 50 years. It began, I believe, in 1953. We need this festival, not only for the immense pleasure it offers to thousands of Western Australians every year, but also for the high national and international profile it gives our State. The festival is widely recognised as being in the first rank of multi-arts festivals in the world. I urge members to get right behind it and support it in every way they can.