

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF THE ARTS

Statement

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [6.46 pm]: On a much more positive note, tonight I would like to acknowledge an event we held here at Parliament last night, the launch of the Parliamentary Friends of the Arts. We had a great roll-up of the who's who of the arts community from all corners. My co-convener Hon Dr Brad Pettitt and I put on a function last night and invited lots of members of the arts community, and they were very well received. I would like to acknowledge June and Kelly from the Chamber of Arts and Culture Western Australia for helping us with the guest list and inviting those who came along. I thank all the members of the arts community from right across the state. We had plenty of arts people from the great southern, the wheatbelt and even from the Kimberley attend last night. The Minister for Culture and the Arts, the great artisan himself, Hon David Templeman, entertained the crowd with a rousing speech and again showed his and the government's commitment to the arts.

We had fantastic music from a string quartet—I understand it might have been little bit loud for some people last night—which provided a bit of culture to the event. I would like to acknowledge Aquila. Anyone who wants to engage a string quartet at their place can give them a call.

We also had a rock star in the house. Kav Temperley from Eskimo Joe was a special guest. He gave a speech about his time emerging as a young and upcoming musician, and how much more difficult it is now for young bands to make it, with the cost of touring and declining crowds post-COVID.

It has been a difficult environment for the arts community over the last few years, and crowds have not rushed back to events, exhibitions and theatre productions in the numbers before the COVID pandemic. There are now cost-of-living pressures on families as well, which has not helped.

The big message from last night is that the arts community needs you. The arts community needs you to go and see a play, watch a live gig, go and see an exhibition, get involved, buy a CD or download some music—whatever you can do to help our artists and the arts community, because it has been a difficult few years. Get involved, everyone. If you can, please support our arts community because they need you more than ever.