

“HOMELESS FOR A NIGHT”

Statement by Member for Collie-Preston

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie-Preston) [12.55 pm]: I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge a Collie community event that I participated in, whereby a group of community leaders experienced homelessness for a night. The event, on Saturday, 5 September, was organised by Joe Italiano, Collie’s Rotary International director, the regional manager of Rural Press and a local resident. The “Homeless for a Night” event was held as a fundraiser for homeless people, and also as a forum to highlight the plight of Australia’s 120 000 people who find themselves homeless every night. The event raised \$20 727, some of which came from sponsorship. Some came from donations and a portion came from several pub crawls organised by local journalist and participant Elysia Tilbrook. The pub crawls involved a group visiting local establishments and encouraged patrons to donate to a good cause. Collie Rotary Club has decided to commit the funds raised to local projects that will benefit disadvantaged members of our community. We all experienced, to a small degree, the difficulties that homeless people suffer every night in their quest for a safe, dry and warm bed. Sleeping in a cardboard box with Styrofoam for insulation and a thin sleeping bag, even with friendly company, is not to be recommended. If anyone in this place has ever spent a winter night in Collie, they will appreciate how inclement the weather can be. We were subjected to heavy rain, wind and bone-chilling cold. I would like to acknowledge the other 23 participants who spent the night with me in the main street in town. They were: Gary Wood; Geoff Blackwood; Joe Italiano; Kerry James; Tania Marsden; Keith Hopkins; Norm Marlborough; Anna Farrell; Elysia Tilbrook; Sarah Stanley; Nola Marion; Patrick Warrand; Glyn Yates; Bob Greig; Joseph Mikhail; Hamish James; Peter Blurton; Tony Ambrose; Drew de le Rie; Gary Evans; Mike Booth; Mark Sanders; and Peter Froud. Thanks again to Joe Italiano and Collie Rotary Club for organising the event.