

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Statement

The PRESIDENT: The very stylish Hon Kyle McGinn.

HON KYLE MCGINN (Mining and Pastoral) [9.55 pm]: Thank you, Madam President. I rise tonight to talk about an event that happened last week—an event I enjoy every year. This year was probably one of the best I have celebrated. The theme for last week's event was "More powerful together". Of course, I am talking about International Women's Day. Last week, we celebrated quite a few events; it was not just one day for us out there. I want to share with the chamber some of the stories I heard and some of the things I noticed in the goldfields that make that place very special.

On the Wednesday evening of the sixth, we attended a Women in Mining event at the WA School of Mines, and Minister McGurk came out to address the congregation. Women attended from throughout the industry, from some who had come straight from work, still in their hi-vis clothes and still wearing their work boots, to women who are studying geotechnology. There were women from overseas who are studying in Australia as well as local women.

It was amazing to see how they all rallied around and listened when the minister spoke, particularly when she was speaking about the Women's Plan and that we now have a minister specifically looking into domestic violence. We know it is a massive issue in Western Australia. When Minister McGurk talks about it, it is very powerful, knowing a minister in Western Australia is handling domestic violence issues directly. We could see in everyone's eyes that they were glad to see that she had gone out to the goldfields to deliver that speech.

A young lady from Women in Mining, whose name I believe is Nicole, and who is a sparky, delivered an amazing, powerful speech. As happens at these events, the microphone went dead halfway through her speech, but she battled on and delivered a great speech about how she decided one day that she would become an electrician. She was working in human resources for a mining company at the time but decided that she wanted to be an electrician. She did not let anything get in her way; she went out and fought for it. She is now a qualified sparky working in the resource sector. That event was really inspiring and kicked off what was to be a really good week.

The following morning I hosted an International Women's Day event—unfortunately, not on the day but the day before. I hosted that event because last year the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre invited me and the whole town along to its International Women's Day event. Over 300 women attended in the town hall. I heard some of the best motivational speeches and stories I had ever heard at an event. The amount of respect shown in the room for each other was amazing. It inspired me to ensure that these types of events keep going in the goldfields.

Another event is coming up this month. Rosie Batty will be coming over to speak in the goldfields. I know from personal experience that she is a very powerful speaker to listen to, with one hell of a story. This year they decided to postpone the event until Rosie Batty was there, so there was a risk that there would not be an International Women's Day event. We could not let that happen, so we put that on in the morning and, unexpectedly, way too many people applied to come along. Women from different industries and backgrounds attended. We had to cap the number at 50, unfortunately, so there were 50 women in the room, from CEOs and aspiring CEOs to council women, teachers and community groups—a broad spectrum of women.

One thing I am learning to do better now as a politician is to listen to a bit of advice, particularly from these women. It is a bit awkward for a man to be emceeing an International Women's Day event in the morning. I thought, "Do you know what? You're right; I think that's probably wrong." I want to give huge accolades to my electorate officer, Georgia Foukes-Taylor. She did a lot of work organising this event and engaging members to ensure that it was done properly and appropriately, and was delivered as professionally as possible. Me being me, I put her on the spot and suggested that she be the master of ceremonies. Typically, Georgia, in her fashion, absolutely nailed it, and we had probably one of the best breakfasts I have seen this year, if not since I have been in politics. It was enjoyable and engaging, and it was in a safe space, which was critical as well. The minister delivered a speech about women's planning, and we talked about what women in the goldfields want to see happen for the future planning of women in this state. It was a massive thing for these women to give direct input to the minister, write it down on a sheet of paper and read it all out. I was sitting in the back listening to it, and it was powerful stuff.

We had an Aboriginal elder doing the welcome to country. I had not met her before, but her name was Joyce Nudding, and she delivered a beautiful welcome to country. She is Maddawonga, and she not only delivered the message in language, but also then explained her life and that of her mother, the connection to land and her story, which to me is so powerful and moving. We are talking about a culture that is 60 000 years old, if not more, and I had this lady here talking and sharing her story with all these women in the room. It was powerful and it was much appreciated. I could tell that Joyce enjoyed the day as well, sharing her experiences with the minister.

Obviously, we held this event in the morning because a lot of these women had to go to work, so we managed to wrap it up. It was a healthy breakfast as well, by the way. We had yoghurt, granola and all that hippie stuff that we have nowadays for breakfast, instead of bacon and eggs. It was a great breakfast, and I feel as though this event may take off, and hopefully I will be able to hold it again and again.

One thing I need to say for International Women's Day is that what inspired me most about these goldfields women is that they want to do this for the future generations. They want to do this to make it an equal playing field. They want to be respected in their jobs and in the opportunity of progressing in these jobs. It is not a tokenistic day for these women; it is an opportunity to get in the room and start talking about the real problems. As it was a safe space, I am not going to talk about the stories that were told, but I definitely want to put across to members in this chamber that they were powerful, and every woman in that room left there with an idea of what they are going to do harder, better and stronger this year to achieve their goals. To those women, and all the women around the world who celebrated International Women's Day, if I had a hat, my hat is off to you.