

WOMEN'S INTERESTS — ZONTA INTERNATIONAL — CENTENARY

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MS S.F. McGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women's Interests) [12.15 pm]: I rise today to inform the house of Zonta International's centenary. Zonta has an incredible history of supporting vulnerable women all over the world. This year Zonta marks 100 years since a small group of pioneering women gathered in Buffalo, New York, with a vision to help all women realise greater equality by using their individual and collective expertise to serve their community. The word "Zonta" is derived from the Lakota language of the native American Sioux people and means honest and trustworthy. In 1923, Zonta's first international project was to care for 115 000 orphan children and women in Turkey. In 1930, Amelia Earhart joined Zonta with a vision of economic independence for women, and went on to expand the opportunities for women in science. Today the organisation has over 1 200 clubs comprising 30 000 members across 67 countries. With the ethos of "think global, act local", Zontians have provided more than \$41 million to give women access to education, health care and safe living conditions.

The first Zonta clubs were established in New Zealand in 1965 and in Australia in 1966. We have six very active clubs here in WA, including Perth, Perth northern suburbs, Bunbury, Dunsborough, Peel and Swan hills. WA's district 23 provides much-needed products and services for women in need all over the world, and its important work cannot be underestimated. It makes and distributes breast care cushions for women and men recovering from breast surgery in Australia. Zonta Australia's birthing kits project has contributed to more than two million kits being sent to developing countries. In addition, district 23 supports a number of education awards, including the Amelia Earhart fellowships; Jane M. Klausman women in business scholarships, and the Young Women in Public Affairs Awards. In WA since 1982, the Zonta House Refuge Association has provided support services to women who have experienced family and domestic violence, homelessness and other crises. I was honoured to host Zonta members from across Western Australia at Parliament House last week to celebrate this occasion. I know that the next century will benefit from Zonta's efforts to work towards an equal future for women and girls.