FRIENDSHIP GROUP FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

Statement

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [5.42 pm]: Last night, Hon Sophia Moermond; Hannah Beazley, the member for Victoria Park; and I held the inaugural event for the Friendship Group for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. I want to thank a couple of people, if I could. It was a very successful event, mainly because a number of politicians—yourselves—turned up but also because many people within that community turned up. I want to briefly focus on the deafblind, who also have intrinsic requirements within that community.

I want to thank the Minister for Disability Services because he not only came and opened the event, but also stayed throughout the whole event and spoke with people from the community. I thank Hon Kyle McGinn, the parliamentary secretary, for doing the same. I want to thank Hansard particularly for providing communication access realtime translation services because a number of people there from the community could only read text. I thank the Auslan interpreters who were there.

All in all, it was a very successful event. I want to reinforce that it is the start of the conversation for that community. I want them to be able to take the opportunities that the friendship group can provide, particularly educating ourselves on the community's needs. For the deaf and hard of hearing, including the deafblind, it is not a visible challenge. If we see somebody walking down the street, we do not know that they are deaf. That creates a lot of problems for them. It is not something obvious. I think when we see something that is obvious that needs to be fixed, we get along and fix it. When it is not so obvious and we do not know the challenges of that community, it is much harder and a bigger challenge for us. I hope this friendship group will provide the community an opportunity to educate us on their needs. I want to thank everyone who made time to attend the event.