

BUNBURY FOODBANK — ROB PRESTAGE

Statement

HON COL HOLT (South West) [9.50 pm]: I rise briefly to talk about Foodbank and one particular gentleman who works at Foodbank. Members may be aware that today Foodbank announced its Christmas appeal. I want to raise awareness with all members, and everyone glued to the internet viewing this debate, of the great work that Foodbank does, and I urge them to donate heartily to those people in our community who may need a bit of extra assistance over the Christmas period.

I want to talk about one particular gentleman, Rob Prestage, from Bunbury Foodbank. He was nominated recently in the Regional Achievement and Community Awards, which were held on Friday evening. Rob was nominated for the Horizon Power Leadership and Innovation Award. Although he was not successful in winning it, I acknowledge that it is a great achievement for him to have been nominated and for him to have accepted that nomination, and I acknowledge that he is a legend in the community of Bunbury.

I want to let members know what he has done for Foodbank in Bunbury. In 2004 there was no such thing as Foodbank in Bunbury. It had no building, no donor, no recipient, no volunteer, no staff and no money; it had nothing, basically. Rob, through his long-term involvement with Rotary in Bunbury, decided that he had better hold a meeting and address this lack of a Foodbank service in the South West. Being a long-term resident of the South West, he knew there were people, families and charities out there who really needed the support of Foodbank. He therefore started Foodbank in Bunbury in 2004. He has been there ever since and is really the driving force behind it. Now Foodbank in Bunbury has great big new premises, furniture, fittings, walk-in freezers, a coolroom, offices and trucks. It actually picks up and delivers food from all over the South West. Basically Rob has managed to draw around him a core group of 35 volunteers who help week in, week out; but Rob is really the driving force behind them. I encourage any member who visits Bunbury to go and see the volunteers at Foodbank in Bunbury and see the great work that they do. They are all volunteers, mostly seniors, but also people from the disability sector who want to give back to the community, and they get a real kick out of it. If any member wants to go along and say “congratulations” to them, I am sure they would absolutely love it.

I want to read a little passage from Rob’s nomination —

Rob Prestage is a Vietnam Veteran and has faced many difficulties during the course of his life. It is the measure of the man that he continues to give of himself for the common good of the community.

That sums up the sort of bloke he is. I did some work for Foodbank back in August and I was stunned by Rob’s humility. He could not offer enough thanks to the small support I was able to provide to Foodbank, but in reality it is about him and I acknowledge that he is a legend in Bunbury. Although he did not win the award, it was a great effort to be nominated, and good on him! Places like Bunbury and the communities we have in Western Australia are all the richer for guys like Rob.