

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Statement by Minister for Women's Interests

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Minister for Women's Interests) [12.07 pm]: Last Tuesday marked International Women's Day 2016. This year the theme was "eliminating violence against women and girls". Violence against women is entirely preventable and we all have a role to play to end this violence around the world.

Over the last week, I was pleased to attend in my capacity as Minister for Women's Interests many events and activities to celebrate the achievements and milestones of women, as well as events that highlighted the plight of women in domestic violence situations. The celebrations commenced for me on Friday, 4 March when I attended the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA Women in Resources Awards. On Tuesday, I took part in a panel discussion hosted by Ernst and Young, which explored how we can accelerate global gender parity with specific actions that assist women's advancement in the workplace. I also had the privilege of attending the WA Women's Hall of Fame induction ceremony, and was deeply inspired at the calibre of women who were celebrated this year. On Wednesday, I attended the United Nations International Women's Day breakfast and was touched by the words of Sister Lorraine Garasu, who discussed the plight of Papua New Guinean women. I attended a domestic violence shelter run by the Salvation Army, assisted by the donations of the Path of Hope Foundation, with my parliamentary colleagues Eleni Evangel, MLA, and Andrea Mitchell, MLA. We were very moved at the work they do there and the hope they offer the women in need of their services. I hosted my own launch of International Women's Day 2016 at the State Reception Centre, with the theme "breaking through". This theme recognises the progress that is being made towards gender equality, while also acknowledging that women's ability to fully participate in the community is influenced by a wide range of interconnected issues.

Each day throughout this important week I attended a number of other functions, events and celebrations, including the Grace Vaughan Memorial Lecture, where Dorinda Cox delivered an excellent lecture on the decline of Aboriginal people since European colonisation; meeting with a group of senior police staff and our latest group of cadets to discuss how we can encourage women into leadership positions in WA Police; meeting with several groups of school students to discuss leadership, as well as the opportunities that are available to young women in non-traditional careers; and an event I hosted with women in small business in my electorate to facilitate networking and discussion on superannuation options for women.

I look forward to working further in this portfolio to assist women in economic independence, to address the gender pay gap and to encourage their leadership aspirations. I acknowledge the participation of many members of Parliament from both this house and the other house over that week in celebrating achievements of women in Western Australia.