

PLAYGROUPS — EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Statement by Member for Gosnells

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [12.56 pm]: I wish to acknowledge the mums, dads and carers who enrich the early childhood development phase of their children's lives by being members of morning playgroups. As well as being excellent socialisation opportunities for their children, morning playgroups give the mums, dads and carers the occasion to exchange notes on their experiences. Playgroups provide a vital means for developing peer support for what must be one of the most rewarding, most important, and sometimes challenging, life experiences. The evidence of experts such as Professor Fiona Stanley shows that the early months and years of a child's life are crucial, and that making up for lost time—even for children just starting school at five years old—is difficult, and of course it gets harder and harder to catch up as they grow up. I especially want to recognise some of the playgroups in my electorate and some of the people who make that special effort to be leaders and organisers of their groups. At the Thornlie playgroup Kate Engelbrecht is president, Dianne Cash is secretary, and Crystal Glossop is membership coordinator. They are all major contributors. At the Forest Lakes playgroup Donna Stevens and Juliet Averill are special drivers for that group; Nicole Smith is at the Tiddlee-winks playgroup; Sue Garwood is at the Huntingdale Cherubs playgroup; and Christine Percy is at the Gosnells playgroup. The federal government's Australian Early Development Index shines a bright light on the school readiness of young children in the Gosnells electorate, and I congratulate people of Gosnells electorate for doing their best to enrich the early childhood years.