

CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY — THORNLIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Statement by Member for Gosnells

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [12.26 pm]: On 30 May this year, 25 local people became Australian citizens at a ceremony and school assembly at Thornlie Primary School in my Gosnells electorate. The celebration is coordinated by Dr Theresa Nazareth, a teacher at the school. The ceremonies have taken place at the school for a few years and it has been my privilege to be invited as the local state member of Parliament. The event is inspirational, extremely successful and highly educational. It is a remarkable whole-of-school effort, with students sharing their cultures and countries of origin through artwork displays. This year's event included well-rehearsed music and dance that gave an insight into the backgrounds of families in the school community who were born in various other countries. Until very recently, there were no other schools in Australia enabling citizenship ceremonies and it took collaboration between the school and local government—the City of Gosnells—to initiate this innovative project.

The federal Department of Immigration and Citizenship came to find out more about the ceremony three years ago and subsequently is now supporting the event. As a result of the school's trailblazing, the commonwealth government has documented and evaluated the initiative, and it is now being reproduced in other Australian schools. The school anticipates that the City of Gosnells will continue to find candidates from the community to complete their citizenship at Thornlie Primary School.