

THORNLIE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL — VOLUNTEER MENTORING PROGRAM

Statement by Member for Gosnells

MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells) [12.58 pm]: The school volunteer mentoring program is the perfect opportunity for young and old to break down barriers and help one another. As I visit schools in my electorate I am constantly impressed by the quality of today's young people. Many show great thoughtfulness, a willingness to learn and tremendous community spirit, which gives me great hope for the future; yet I hear stories from older people who are fearful of younger people, often because they have no contact with them and also because some elements in the media revel in stories of bad behaviour by young people. One remedy to this is the school volunteer program. Since 1991 it has been focused on mentoring young people at risk of disengagement from education. At Thornlie Senior High School, the mentoring program provides the perfect opportunity for older people to pass on their skills and knowledge to younger people. The program is satisfying for all concerned. It is rewarding to help a young person who is perhaps struggling with their reading, and it is a relief to a young person to feel they can share their learning difficulty, or perhaps learn in a different way, with the benefit of one-to-one tuition. A large body of research shows the benefits that come from intergenerational programs. At Thornlie Senior High School I especially acknowledge the volunteer mentoring work of Dawn and Neville Raxworthy, and new recruit Dr David Shalley. The program at Thornlie is coordinated by Ms Anchala Mahindroo.

Craig Stewart, the chief executive officer of the school volunteer program, has recently contacted members seeking support for this excellent program. It is estimated that the current value of the program to the community is \$1.2 million. I believe it is essential that government do its bit to support this initiative that breaks down the offensive stereotypes that are peddled as reasons for separating generations rather than integrating them.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm