

PLAYGROUPS

Statement by Member for Riverton

17 September 2009

DR M.D. NAHAN (Riverton) [12.56 pm]: In Western Australia there are more than 500 playgroups providing more than 15 000 families throughout our community with opportunities to learn together through play.

Within my electorate there are six playgroups, being Parkwood, Riverton, Rostrata, Shelley, Willetton and Lynwood-Ferndale, which provide mums, dads, grandparents and caregivers with the opportunity to meet each week, with their children, for social interaction and fun.

These playgroups provide an ideal environment for fostering children's development through the nurturing of basic language and interaction skills, whilst providing a support system for adults to share experiences, ideas and interests.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Willetton and Parkwood playgroup sessions, and had a wonderful insight into the role that not-for-profit, community-based organisations, such as these playgroups, have in supporting early childhood development in my electorate.

Furthermore, at the Parkwood session I witnessed firsthand the critical role that these community gatherings play with integrating families from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Given the growing ethnic diversity in my electorate and in Western Australia, this is a windfall.

Playgroups tend to cater heavily to families with a number of preschool children, taken care of by a full-time mum. With a mini baby boom going on, there is a growing number.

The importance of playgroups is increasingly recognised by academia and across government, and I ask my fellow members of Parliament to join with me in congratulating and thanking the many coordinators and volunteers of each playgroup for their invaluable contribution and service to the community.