

Protection ensures marine future

The **Marine Bioregional Planning Process** is well underway, with the Minister for the Environment, the Hon Tony Burke, now focusing on creating proposals for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), including sanctuaries, in the southwest region. Sanctuaries will provide protection for marine life equivalent to that given in National Parks, while other MPAs will accommodate a range of existing activities such as recreational and commercial fishing, oil and gas exploration and eco-tourism enterprises such as whale watching. The nearest marine park will be more than 5 kilometres off shore. Coupled with existing fisheries regulations, MPAs will help stabilize catches, provide insurance against stock depletion, and protect feeding and breeding areas resulting in spill-over benefits where fish can restock surrounding waters.



Hand Delivery

Melissa delivers thousands of pledges supporting Marine Protected Areas and *Save Our Marine Life* postcards from Fremantle electorate constituents to the Minister for Environment, the Hon Tony Burke.

Disability care, support under the microscope

Melissa Parke has welcomed the WA state government's \$647,000 commitment to fund a three-year clinical trial that will strive to improve care and quality of life for muscular dystrophy patients. The trial will test therapies pioneered in WA and will be conducted in conjunction with the Australian Neuromuscular Research Institute and the Muscular Dystrophy Association of WA at the Queen Elizabeth II Medical Centre in Nedlands. Muscular Dystrophy — in all its many forms — is a painful and debilitating disease that gradually erodes the mobility of sufferers and leads to early death.



The trial aims to help people like Conor Murphy, centre, of Beaconsfield. Conor suffers from Duchenne MD, one of the most prevalent forms which afflicts 1 in 4,000 males in Australia.

The Productivity Commission has released its **Draft Report into Disability Care and Support**. In concluding that current arrangements are systemically flawed, the Commission is proposing two schemes be considered — a National Disability Insurance Scheme that would work like Medicare to cover all Australians and their families in case of significant disability, and a smaller scheme to cover people's lifetime care and support needs if they acquire a catastrophic injury by accident. Visit www.pc.gov.au or contact my office for details on how to **comment on the draft by 30 April**.

Our Community



Dirt work underway for contractor training centre at Jandakot

The Australian Government has contributed \$1.766 million in **National Training Infrastructure Program** funds towards a new skills centre in Jandakot. The Civil Contractors Federation is also providing \$1.7 million to support the project.

"This skill centre represents the Government's commitment to provide the sector with infrastructure that can engage and encourage trainees, and properly prepare them to be part of the highly skilled workforce of tomorrow," Ms Parke said.

"Students who complete training here will enter the workforce with invaluable experience."

"The recent devastating natural disasters in Qld and WA have brought home to us how much we need a trained civil construction workforce; a workforce that can quickly start work on rebuilding vital infrastructure like roads and bridges."

On completion, the facility will enable the training of up to 100 students per year, providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to gain employment in the civil construction industry. The skills centre is scheduled for completion by early 2012.

Melissa and Ross Barrett, National President of the Civil Contractors Federation of Australia turn the first shovel of sand at the Jandakot future skills centre training site.



Gimme Shelter gives hope

On the balmy evening of Saturday 19 February, concert-goers, volunteers of all stripes and the stars aligned to see the fourth annual **Gimme Shelter** homelessness benefit concert succeed.

Thanks to the approximately 1,200 ticket holders — you helped the **Gimme Shelter Association** raise more than \$39,000 to directly address the issue of homelessness right here in our community — and thanks to the talented performers, behind-the-scenes volunteers and sponsors who made the event not only possible but a wonderful occasion. The Hon Kevin Rudd, Foreign Minister, received a marvellous reception and I thank him for his support of our local effort to address homelessness.

For too many Australians, homelessness is not a temporary condition; it's not something that comes out of the blue with a storm or a fire — it's a chronic state of instability, with all the consequences that come when you do not have your own place. There are currently \$5 billion worth of housing programs in train, including direct support for social housing through State governments, and affordable housing incentives for the private and not-for-profit sector through the **National Rental Affordability Scheme**.



Clockwise from bottom left: Audience members greet Kevin Rudd; St Pat's Starlight Hotel Choir kick off the entertainment; Melissa addresses the crowd.

Measured medicine benefiting patients, reducing costs

Melissa visited Fremantle physician Dr John Troy to talk about his surgery's participation in the Commonwealth's **Australian Primary Care Collaboratives** program coordinated by the **Improvement Foundation** and **Fremantle GP Network**.

Since 2005, the program has facilitated changes to Dr Troy's patient management that have improved the identification and treatment of patients with deadly diseases such as Coronary Heart Disease, Diabetes and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). The program has engaged patients living with these diseases, resulting in a better quality of life, reduced rates of emergency hospital admissions, and lower healthcare costs.



Collaborative Care for Chronic Disease

From left: Claire Woolfitt, Services Manager for the Fremantle GP Network; Alison Coughlin, National Program Director of the Improvement Foundation; COPD patients Peter Dailey and Alastair McNoughton; Melissa Parke; Raelene Troy, Practice Manager; and Dr John Troy, met to talk about the experience and benefits of a targeted approach to patient care.

Volunteers are key to care at Native ARC animal refuge

In a recent visit to **Native ARC** wildlife rehabilitation centre in Bibra Lake, Melissa thanked and presented volunteers with **Commonwealth Certificates of Appreciation** for their efforts. Native ARC relies primarily on donations and volunteer support to carry on its work caring for hundreds of injured and abandoned native animals — mostly birds and reptiles — each year.

Visit www.nativearc.org.au or call **9417 7105** to find out how you can help Native ARC.



Hearts of Gold

From left: Elaine Young, Melissa, Alex Patmore, Native ARC Chairman Bob Dunn, Sue Moore, Lynton Moore, Carol Stevenson, Native ARC manager Diane Munrowd, and work experience student Hayley Richardson.

International Women's Day

City of Fremantle Morning Tea
Tuesday, 8 March 2011

100 years ago,

when the first IWD was held, we were still 10 years from seeing Australia's first female parliamentarian — Edith Cowan elected to the WA parliament. In 1911, there was still 55 years to go before we removed the requirement that a woman who married had to resign from the federal public service.

And we were still 32 years away from seeing the first women elected to the federal parliament — Dorothy Tangney (a Freo woman) and Enid Lyons. Even now, of the more than 1,000 members elected to the House of Representatives since Federation, fewer than 100 have been women.

Thankfully, we have made a great deal of progress in the last 100 years. As Paul Keating famously said "equal representation of women in politics is not just about women, it is about democracy."

My predecessor, Carmen Lawrence, was the first woman to be Premier and Treasurer of WA.

In Julia Gillard, Australia now has its first woman Prime Minister.

Across all Parliaments in Australia, the Labor Party, through its affirmative action policy, has 37.5% of its 387 representative positions filled by women. That's a significant achievement, but we still have further to go.

Of course the Greens lead the way on that front, with women representing exactly 50% of their 28 elected representatives across all parliaments...

We should be proud that women now make up more than 50% of bachelor degree graduates in Australia; but at the same time we acknowledge that the **International Violence Against Women Survey** has reported that 57% of Australian women experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime.

We should take heart from the introduction of Australia's first paid parental leave scheme; but remain angry that women are still discriminated against when it comes to equal pay for equal work. If we look at the situation of aged-care workers, most of whom are women, they are taking care of the most vulnerable people in our community — our own elderly family members — they are carrying out backbreaking and often heartbreaking work, and yet they are among the lowest paid and under-appreciated workers in Australia.

The inequities that confront women are amplified

if they are poor; they are amplified if they are migrants or refugees; they are amplified if they are indigenous; and they are amplified still further if they are women trying to eke out survival for themselves and their children in a developing country...



IWD reminds us that the struggle for women's rights is a local struggle, it is a national struggle and it is an international struggle and it is one that we must keep having if we are to truly ensure women's place in the world.

There is more that each of us can do. Every one of us can be part of the effort to help the cause of women's rights and freedoms.

You can be a mentor, which means taking the opportunity to give advice and support to women who ask for your help, or who could use it. You can get involved in your local community. Margaret Mead wisely said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." You can join with the national women's effort in calling for an end to violence against women and equal pay.

You can get involved in the international women's effort. As women, most of us in Australia have freedoms and opportunities that are beyond the contemplation of the women in refugee camps on the border of Sudan; the trafficked women in Kosovo; or the little girls in the Pacific Islands whose health and maternal prospects are so much worse than our own. We can choose to address those things by joining a group like the Soroptimists International or the UNAA or by supporting the international aid work of organisations like Oxfam, UNICEF or WorldVision.

You can get involved in politics at the local, state, or federal level. Here in Freo we have the example of Carmen Lawrence, who in her first speech to federal parliament urged women to become more politically engaged. She quoted another feisty woman, Sarah Henderson, who said: "Don't wait for a light to appear at the end of the tunnel. Stride up there and light the bloody thing yourself."

Visit www.melissaparke.com.au to read the full speech.