




Speech by

Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY; BPW CABOOLTURE

 **Mr RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (9.36 pm): As all members of this House are aware, today, 8 March 2011, is the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. Over 100 years ago, women attending the International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen agreed that a day of celebration—a women's day—should be held on the same day every year in every country around the world to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women and to call on governments to do more to further the status of women around the world.

In recent times the celebration of International Women's Day has spread around the world and is now even an official holiday in some countries including, among others, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Cuba, Russia and Zambia. In some other countries it has become a tradition for men to honour the special women in their lives with small gifts like flowers or chocolates. I hope all honourable gentlemen of this House have today sent chocolates to the special women in their lives.

Despite the progress that has been made in respect of women's equality and status, including our nation's proud moment of electing our first ever female Prime Minister last year, there is clear evidence that, even in our country, women in some industries are not paid the same as their male counterparts, that women are not represented in equal numbers in business and politics and that globally access to education and health services and protection from violence is worse for women than for men.

As someone who is interested in the courage of political leadership, I take this opportunity to acknowledge my mother, who, as a young woman employed by the then Landsborough city council, was the first woman to take maternity leave rather than be forced to resign, as was the usual expectation at that time. She was one of the few people to participate in industrial action in the early 1980s for better pay for council employees, especially female council employees. I pay tribute to all women today on International Women's Day.

Tonight in Caboolture, the Business and Professional Women club of Caboolture is holding their annual candle-lighting ceremony. This ceremony is held every year on the same day by every BPW club in the world. Obviously, due to parliamentary commitments I was unable to attend the BPW Caboolture candle-lighting ceremony tonight. Nonetheless, I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Robyn Lachmund, club president Kimberly James and all the BPW Caboolture ladies in organising this year's candle-lighting ceremony. I know that a lot of work goes into organising these ceremonies. So from Parliament House, I say thank you and well done to BPW Caboolture for their contribution to International Women's Day and to the advancement of the status of women in our region, our nation and our world.