

FOODBANK WA — HEALTHY FOOD FOR ALL ABILITIES PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Disability Services

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Disability Services) [12.18 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house about a McGowan government-funded food and nutrition education program for people with disability now being delivered in regional Western Australia. On 25 October 2022, I announced the expansion of Foodbank WA's Healthy Food for All Abilities program to be delivered in regional Western Australia. This interactive food literacy and nutrition education program is designed to teach people with disability, parents who have a child with disability and their support workers skills to enable them to choose and prepare healthy food.

In the sessions, participants enjoy cooking and sharing a meal together, while building confidence about food choices. It is an opportunity to connect socially, while learning valuable life skills. Developing and maintaining healthy food habits is important for all in our community. For many people with disability, this is especially important as healthy food habits lead to better health outcomes, increased independence and skills and confidence to make decisions and enjoy the experience of creating and sharing healthy meals.

About 160 people with disability, along with support workers and family members, have already attended sessions in Perth. This success prompted Foodbank WA to take the program to regional towns, starting with Bunbury, before moving on to Geraldton, with plans for sessions in the wheatbelt and goldfields–Esperance regions in 2023. Living in a regional centre should not be a barrier to accessing this excellent program and, as a regional member, I am very pleased that Foodbank WA will take this program to the regions.

The program is funded by the \$5 million innovation fund as part of the state disability strategy. The innovation fund was set up to build the capacity of people with disability, their families and their community, regardless of their location, and the Healthy Food for All Abilities program is a great example of that. Most importantly, the innovation fund was set up to find innovative ways to enable people with disability to be engaged and empowered and to live life as they choose. I thank Foodbank WA for its passion and expertise in developing and delivering this initiative, which I know will make a difference in many people's lives.