

DISABILITY SERVICES ACT — REFORM

Statement by Minister for Disability Services

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Disability Services) [9.06 am]: I am pleased to stand today and inform the house of the McGowan government's commitment to reform WA's decades-old disability legislation. The current Disability Services Act 1993 primarily relates to the provision and regulation of state-led disability services and related matters in Western Australia and will be reformed to promote inclusion and positive community attitudes relating to people with disability. The legislation is almost 30 years old and, as we know, the state's disability sector has undergone significant change during this time. Over 49 000 eligible Western Australians have joined the National Disability Insurance Scheme; the Disability Services Commission has become part of the Department of Communities; the Office of Disability has been formed; *A Western Australia for everyone: State disability strategy 2020–2030* was published; and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability is ongoing.

The state government recognises that consistent and contemporary reforms are needed in WA's disability legislation to ensure that it meets the needs and expectations of today's community. The Office of Disability has released a consultation paper and is inviting people with disability, their families and carers, the many stakeholders and all Western Australians who have an interest in Western Australia's disability legislation to provide feedback during the three-month consultation period, which is open until 10 June 2023. Key issues for discussion in the consultation paper include the principles applicable to people with disability, appropriate safeguards for people with disability, the access and inclusion needs of people with disability, and ongoing service provision for specific cohorts. The voice of lived experience is vital in this process, and I strongly encourage people from diverse backgrounds, locations and experiences to provide their feedback. The daily experience of people with disability should be one of inclusion and positive community attitudes, and it is important that the WA disability legislation supports this position. The consultation paper is available on the Communities website, and I ask all members to consider it and share it with their constituents and contacts.