

SENIORS STRATEGY

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [1.30 pm]: I rise to inform the house about the progress of Western Australia's first seniors strategy. The WA seniors strategy is a whole-of-government, 10-year strategy led by the Department of Communities to support older Western Australians of all backgrounds throughout the state to live their best life as they age. Public consultation sessions for the strategy's development, which commenced in November 2021, have now concluded. The public consultation period included online, face-to-face and phone consultations and public submissions, as well as local government and community organisation-hosted events. The use of online and postcard surveys translated into Chinese, Arabic, Italian and Vietnamese to ensure that we engaged people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds has worked well during the COVID-19 period. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to the more than 2 000 seniors and pre-seniors who have generously given their time to participate in the consultation process to date. I also want to thank MPs who were involved in consultation sessions, particularly my parliamentary secretary, Hon Kyle McGinn, MLC, who attended every single session on behalf of the McGowan government.

A series of targeted consultation sessions will be held over the coming months to further strengthen the voice of older Aboriginal Western Australians in the development of the strategy. The preliminary themes arising from the consultation include: access to information and services; social inclusion; connectivity and digital inclusion; community participation; cost of living; ageing with choice; housing and living independently; health; safety and physical activity; transport options and accessibility; employment; and ageism. For the benefit of members, ageism is about defining and indeed discriminating against a person based solely on age rather than recognising a person's ability and ongoing contribution. It is important to acknowledge that regional and remote issues transect almost all these themes and will be a key focus for the strategy.

The strategy, which is set to be launched in 2023, will include a series of action plans that will connect and coordinate activities across government agencies to ensure that systems and services are responsive to older persons' needs. The strategy will guide whole-of-community action in making Western Australia a place where older people can age actively, healthily and in a way that they choose and be happy.