

AGEISM AWARENESS DAY

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [12.28 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that Ageism Awareness Day was marked on 7 October 2023. As Minister for Seniors and Ageing, I am committed to challenging ageism and the negative impact it can have on all Western Australians as they age.

Often, age is one of the first things we notice about other people. Ageism refers to the stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination directed towards people on the basis of their age. It can show up in the way we think, feel and act towards others and ourselves, whether or not we actually realise it. It comes from negative attitudes and beliefs about what it means to be an older person. It can impact on our confidence, quality of life, job prospects, health, social participation and control over life decisions. Research undertaken by the World Health Organization has shown that half the world's population is ageist towards older people. This is why we have a focus on challenging ageism in *An age-friendly WA: State seniors strategy 2023–2033*, and why we will launch a new ageism awareness campaign across Western Australia early next year.

We need to stand for a world without ageism in which people of all ages are valued and respected and their contributions are acknowledged. We need to commit to speak out and take action to ensure that older people can participate on equal terms with others in all aspects of life; reflect on our own attitude towards ageing; think about how we speak and communicate about age and ageing; and have a conversation about ageing and ageism with our family or friends. Although ageist jokes, birthday cards and comments might seem innocuous, they can have significant and far-reaching negative effects. If people are not sure where to start, I encourage them to visit the EveryAGE Counts website and take the “Am I Ageist?” quiz.

Although age is often the first thing we notice about another person, it should not be what defines us or limits our ability to live fulfilling lives. We are all ageing at the same rate, and if we are lucky enough, we will grow into older age. Every step we take towards stamping out ageism will benefit us all and the communities in which we live.