

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GERONTOLOGY

Statement by Minister for Seniors

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine - Minister for Seniors) [9.07 am]: I was asked to attend the eighteenth congress of the International Association of Gerontology held in Brazil in June. The congress is the largest and most important international congress on ageing research and policy issues. Western Australia is now seen as a world leader in the area of active ageing and seniors-related policy, and I was asked to be part of a number of congress panels and round tables, covering areas such as social security and income protection, the inclusion of older people in the development of social policy, elder abuse and neglect and active ageing. The Gallop government was cited many times in presentations as providing international and jurisdictional leadership in active ageing, including the development of an across-government approach to active ageing and its underlying life course approach. We were cited as “the” example of how to provide a policy and service focus on the 95 per cent of seniors who are fit and active. Dr Ann Pawliczko of the United Nations Population Fund stated that Western Australia was a fine example of what can be done for older persons if there is the will to do so. The congress also highlighted the growing international awareness of elder abuse and its terrible impact on our older citizens and families.

As a direct outcome of meetings I held at the congress, the two organisational leaders in the development of international policy on ageing, the World Health Organisation and the International Federation on Ageing, have committed to working with this government to explore and develop world’s best practice in the important areas of elder abuse and the broader elder justice agenda. The collaboration will begin this month when Dr Alexandre Kalache, the World Health Organisation’s coordinator of the ageing and life course team, will be in Perth for the Department of Sport and Recreation’s active conference. During this visit, a sector forum will be held at which this issue will be discussed and future directions for policy and legislation canvassed. To enable jurisdictions to learn from each other about current and best practices in elder justice issues, Western Australia and the IFA will explore the feasibility of a regional forum on elder justice. Dr Kalache will also work with the Office for Seniors Interests and Volunteering to finalise the content of the world’s first active ageing scorecard. The scorecard will provide a measure of how we are progressing on improving the life of our community’s senior members.

I know members of this house will join with me to encourage government and non-government agencies to continue their fine work with this state’s growing seniors population. Their good work is recognised by this government and the rest of the world.