

NATIONAL CARERS WEEK

Statement by Minister for Community Services

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Community Services) [9.15 am]: This week is National Carers Week, which provides an opportunity to raise awareness of, and show appreciation for, the valuable and selfless contribution of more than 320 000 unpaid carers across our state. Unpaid carers provide unpaid ongoing care and assistance to someone in their lives with disability, a chronic illness, mental illness or who is aged or frail. Every day, they provide domestic assistance, help to manage finances, organise appointments, provide or arrange transport and so much more. Carers ease demand on our health and community services sector. In fact, in Australia, the replacement value of that care is estimated at almost \$78 billion annually.

The 2023 National Carers Week theme, “Millions of reasons to care”, reminds us that carers come from all walks of life, backgrounds and ages. That means their needs are unique, as are the needs of the people they are caring for. Carers often put the interests of the person they care for ahead of their own needs, putting carers at risk of social isolation, disconnection from education and employment, and poorer health outcomes. To address those challenges, our government has launched the Carers Information Hub for carers and grandcarers. The information hub provides central access to information and resources to help people identify whether they are a carer, what their rights are and where to get the support services they need. Identifying, recognising and supporting carers is critical to the future of carers, and National Carers Week plays a key role in that regard. This week, I have attended a number of events, including the Carers WA Young Carer Art Awards, the Carers WA stakeholder breakfast and a morning tea I hosted yesterday morning in Parliament House, where I was joined by the member for Scarborough, the member for Kimberley and Hon Donna Faragher. It has been a pleasure to hear carers’ experiences firsthand, including the joy and challenges that come with caring. In fact, I am looking forward to hosting a group of young carers this afternoon to better understand their needs and circumstances.

Individuals and organisations across Australia are getting involved in National Carers Week, including Carers WA, the Department of Communities and my Carers Advisory Council. This week, the Department of Communities took an important step in becoming a more carer friendly organisation. A range of activities are happening across the state, and some prominent buildings in Perth and the regions have been lit up in aqua blue to raise awareness of carers. As we near the end of National Carers Week, I am sure all members will join me in thanking WA’s carers for the amazing role they fulfil.