

**CARERS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

*Statement by Minister for Community Services*

**MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Community Services)** [9.24 am]: I rise today to inform the house of an opportunity to make a difference for Western Australia's hundreds of thousands of carers. Expressions of interest for the WA Carers Advisory Council have opened and will soon close. As defined by the Carers Recognition Act 2004, a carer is a person who provides ongoing support and assistance to a person with disability, a chronic illness—which includes mental illness—or who is frail, without receiving a salary or wage for the care they provide. Carers Advisory Council members are appointed under that act and provide advice to the Minister for Community Services on the needs of carers, and promote recognition of the invaluable contribution they make to our community.

The importance of hearing directly from people with caring experience cannot be understated. An estimated 320 000 people in WA provide unpaid personal care for family and friends. It is estimated that approximately 70 per cent of them are women. The invaluable social and economic contribution they make is astounding. The care they provide is critical to easing demand on the health and community services sector. The estimated annual value of carers to the Australian economy is \$77.9 billion. Therefore, it is vital that the government listens to the experiences of carers and works to provide them with the support they need to continue the selfless work that they do.

WA residents with experience as a carer are strongly encouraged to apply. We want the council to be as diverse as the people it represents. People from Aboriginal or culturally diverse backgrounds, and young carers aged up to 25 years old, are strongly encouraged to apply. Expressions of interest are open until 4.00 pm on Friday, 1 September 2023, and more information can be found by searching for the WA Carers Advisory Council. I am thoroughly enjoying working with the Carers Advisory Council and look forward to updating the house on our work in the lead up to National Carers Week in October.