

BROOME ELDERS FORUM

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [1.26 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house that on Tuesday, 4 October 2022, I attended the Broome elders forum on beautiful Yawuru country. I was accompanied by my parliamentary secretary, Hon Kyle McGinn, MLC.

The proportion of Aboriginal people over the age of 50 across the state is increasing, with one in five Aboriginal people estimated to be over the age of 50 by 2031. In Broome, Aboriginal people over 60 already represent nine per cent of the town's population, making elders forums like these increasingly important. This forum, organised by Hon Rosetta Sahanna, MLC, and facilitated by Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation and Boab Health, was a valuable opportunity to connect with older Aboriginal people in the Broome area, and particularly our elders, who generously shared their wisdom, knowledge and experiences. The forum had a diverse array of wonderful speakers, covering topics across the spectrum of ageing and wellbeing, including health-related areas, legal matters, and where to find information on ageing well in the local community.

I also spoke about the work the McGowan government is doing to support seniors, such as our generous Western Australian Seniors Card, age-friendly communities, and the development of the state's first seniors strategy. My parliamentary secretary was able to speak to a number of older Aboriginal people at the forum about the strategy. He heard their views on ageing in the community, the supports they need to feel they are ageing well, and the barriers as they saw them. It is vital that in the strategy consultation, we hear the voices of Aboriginal people. I was extremely grateful for this opportunity to connect with older Aboriginal people, and all the valuable feedback that we received will be considered in the development of the WA seniors strategy.

The day concluded with a performance by the Burrb Wanggaraju Nurlu youth dance group, which showcased the talents of the local young people involved and provided a fitting end to an informative and fruitful day.

My thanks go to Hon Rosetta Sahanna and her staff for organising the event, to Nirrumbuk Aboriginal Corporation and Boab Health for facilitating the program, to Hon Kyle McGinn for his able support throughout the day, to all the presenters, and also, of course, to the elders and older people of Broome for sharing their stories and providing their insights about what it means to age well and feel included in their local community.