

CHILDREN IN CARE — HOME STRETCH PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Child Protection

MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Minister for Child Protection) [9.26 am]: Deputy Premier, I am pleased to inform the house that the Home Stretch WA Community of Practice won the youth focus sector collaboration award at the WA Youth Awards held recently. Home Stretch supports young people leaving out-of-home care with the option to continue to receive support up to the age of 21, to enable a successful and stable transition to independence. The program also supports carers of the young people who continue living with them, with financial payments to cover expenses such as food, accommodation and utilities.

The statewide expansion of Home Stretch is an important 2021 election commitment of the Cook Labor government. It is implemented by the Department of Communities in partnership with Anglicare WA and Yorganop, facilitating the community of practice function. The Home Stretch Community of Practice is formed by a number of service providers and Aboriginal-controlled organisations that are now providing services throughout the state.

At the beginning of the year, I was privileged to meet some of the young lived-experienced consultants who have guided the statewide implementation of Home Stretch, when we celebrated the milestone of 150 participants in the program. Young people have been at the heart of the design, development and delivery of the Home Stretch WA Community of Practice since its inception, and we are really proud of this. Winning the award for youth focus sector collaboration signifies the incredible co-design, collaboration and collective impact the Home Stretch Community of Practice has developed. I would like to acknowledge their passion and determination in supporting meaningful outcomes for young people leaving care.

Additionally, I would also like to acknowledge Ben Dancey, who is a Home Stretch WA transition coach, and was awarded the Minister for Youth's most outstanding youth worker award. Ben was one of the first youth transition coaches and has helped roll out the program throughout the state. Ben has supported Home Stretch participants to receive holistic and practical support in areas such as relationships, budgeting, housing and employment.

I am glad that my predecessor and current Minister for Youth, Hon Simone McGurk, was there to present these important awards. Congratulations to Ben and the Community of Practice on their awards, and I very much look forward to continuing to update the house on the implementation of this important election commitment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member. I think that, unfortunately, *Hansard* will correct that mistake at the beginning.

Members, before we get on to grievances, I remind everyone that grievances go for seven minutes for questions and responses. I allowed people to go over last time, which was not helpful, so we will be sticking to the seven-minute time limit.