

DEMENTIA ACTION WEEK

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [1.28 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that Dementia Action Week is a national awareness raising initiative developed by Dementia Australia that ran from 19 to 25 September 2022. This year's theme was "A little support makes a big difference". The Dementia Australia campaign aims to reduce the impact that discrimination has on people living with dementia, their families, and carers. It identifies that a little support from the community and healthcare professionals can make a big difference.

Dementia has a significant impact on the lives of 36 500 Western Australians and their families and carers. This number is projected to double by 2050. Some of the impacts of discrimination include family and friends withdrawing from contact with people living with dementia; healthcare professionals communicating with the person's carer, making assumptions they cannot make decisions for themselves; people living with dementia reporting that they are not offered access to wellness and allied services; and people sharing their diagnosis with their employer being less likely to be offered support to continue or transition out of work.

Through the Department of Communities' age-friendly communities program, the McGowan government facilitates stakeholder collaboration between state and local governments and community organisations to support age-friendly practices and networks. The program enables seniors, including those living with dementia, to maintain their participation in, and contribution to, the community, including initiatives that address social isolation and those fostering intergenerational interaction.

Western Australia was the first Australian affiliate member of the World Health Organization's global network of age-friendly cities. The Department of Communities is internationally recognised for its leadership in this space. Dementia Australia's "A little support makes a big difference" campaign provides information and tips to encourage all Australians to increase their understanding of dementia and learn how they can make a difference to the lives of people around them who are impacted and, importantly, to help eliminate discrimination.