

OUTDOORS OCTOBER

Statement by Minister for Sport and Recreation

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Sport and Recreation) [2.04 pm]: I rise to inform the house about the government initiative called Outdoors October. Heading outdoors and getting active is great for physical health and also has important benefits for mental health. That is the message we want to promote to the Western Australian community through Outdoors October.

Nothing clears the head and calms the mind more than going to the beach, jumping in a canoe, flying a kite or camping in a national park. Getting active during Outdoors October is easy; there is an abundance of walking trails and bike trails in Western Australia for walking, mountain biking, horse riding and even snorkeling. The Outdoors October calendar has a list of activities such as hiking, canoeing, abseiling, barefoot bowls, bike riding, birdwatching, camping, expeditions and orienteering—you name it; if it is outdoors, it is available here in our state! Heading outdoors with family, friends or a like-minded group offers added benefits such as helping people feel connected to nature and to a community. The value of being connected to nature cannot be understated. The Liberal–National government started and funded Nature Play WA to promote kids getting back to nature and away from sitting inside looking at their screens.

Outdoors October is an initiative between Outdoors WA and the state government. It builds on Nature Play WA to encourage active recreation in the outdoors. Outdoor and active recreation groups across the state are planning activities to encourage everyone to get outside this month. I am pleased that this government has been able to contribute \$100 000 towards the promotion of the initiative and supporting clubs around the state to put on activities in local communities.

One of the highlights has been last Saturday's Great Aussie Camp Out, which encouraged people to spend the night camping under the stars, whether they do so on a riverbank, in a national park—it could be one of those beautiful national parks of which we have improved the facilities through royalties for region funding—a local campsite or even in the backyard. Special events were held at Department of Sport and Recreation camps, national parks and schools across Western Australia. Last week, the state government was also the co-host of the annual WA Trails and Outdoors Conference. This year's speakers included English outdoor expert Martin Chester and Tasmania's Dr Anita Pryor, who is an authority on bush therapy.

Being physically active is good for our physical and mental health and being in the outdoors is good for our physical and mental health. Being physically active outdoors is a priceless gift we can give ourselves and our families. I encourage every member to get outdoors during Outdoors October.