

**STATE AGED CARE PLAN**

*Statement by Minister for Health*

**MR R.C. KUCERA** (Yokine - Minister for Health) [9.12 am]: On Monday evening this week, I had the pleasure of launching the new state aged care plan for Western Australia 2003 to 2008. For the first time our State has a blueprint to guide the evolution of health and aged care services for older Western Australians. It is clear, concise and user-friendly. The plan will enable the health portfolio to draw together current activities and future initiatives for older people within a comprehensive strategic framework, based on a vision of independence, wellbeing and quality of life for older people through responsive health and aged care services and supports.

Older people are a vital and expanding part of our community. People aged 65 years and over will make up 12.5 per cent of our population by 2011, with people over 80 accounting for around 25 per cent of all people aged 65 years and over. We recognise that the growing number of older people in the community will have a significant impact on the demand for health and aged care services. It is desirable to improve services for older people now but it is imperative to be well placed to manage the significant growth in demand in the years to come. The state aged care plan is a major step forward. It underpins the Government's commitment to ensuring that the health status and lifestyle of older Western Australians continue to improve.

The state aged care plan was developed under the auspices of the WA Aged Care Advisory Council - a vibrant group of people led by Dr Penny Flett. Members of the advisory council have a commitment to improving all aspects of health and aged care services for older Western Australians. This plan is the culmination of 12 months of dedicated work by the advisory council, including wide consultations across metropolitan and rural parts of the State. The strategic framework is based on the clear message to put the older person at the centre of deliberations. The advisory council will carry this perspective into the next round of work when the plan's key strategies are developed into action plans for implementation. The first action plan will address dementia.

The state aged care plan provides a vehicle for the health portfolio's engagement with other government departments in an inter-sectoral response to the needs of an ageing population. At the national level the plan will support the State's agenda in the evolving health care arena. With pleasure, I table the state aged care plan for Western Australia 2003 to 2008 and encourage all members to read it. I have extra copies for the members for Dawesville and Murray-Wellington.

[See paper No 1263.]