

CARERS WEEK

Statement by Minister for Community Development

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah - Minister for Community Development) [12.05 pm]: Mr Speaker, this week is Carers Week. It has the theme “Anyone, Anytime”, in recognition of the fact that many carers do not anticipate their caring role. Family carers are ordinary Australians who have found themselves in a situation that they probably would not have chosen to be in. They have to deal with lots of challenges and often feel very alone. This could happen to anyone at any time.

The Labor government has a strong track record of caring for carers. Upon election, the government provided \$10 million to carers initiatives and developed Australia’s first ever carer specific legislation, the Carers Recognition Act 2004. This commitment to carers has carried over into the government’s current term of office. Programs funded in the first term continue to be funded, and the Carers Recognition Act is in operation, supported by the Carers Advisory Council.

The Carers Advisory Council plays a key role in ensuring that this legislation, and the Carers Charter contained within it, lead to a transformation in the service delivery culture of organisations in the health and disability sectors that directly impact on carers’ lives. It is essential that all service deliverers, government and non-government, recognise carers and their needs.

Recognising the needs of Western Australia’s carers is a key message of public forums being held by the Carers Advisory Council. The first in a series of forums were held in Karratha and Roebourne in August, and the Minister for Disability Services and I had the pleasure of attending. This was followed by a forum in Bunbury last week and another is planned for Kingsley in early December. These forums are very valuable in helping to communicate key issues to service providers, particularly that of recognising carers and the value of their experience, knowledge and skills in caring for someone who is receiving health or disability services.

Under the Carpenter government, new initiatives continue to be developed to support the 248 000 Western Australians who provide care, not for remuneration, but because of love, commitment and a sense of duty. Without their contribution, the quality of life enjoyed by so many would severely diminish. I encourage all members to use Carers Week to acknowledge the selfless and devoted contribution of Western Australians who have taken on the role of carer.