

**WA DISABILITY SUPPORT AWARDS 2021**

*Statement by Minister for Disability Services*

**MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Disability Services)** [12.13 pm]: I rise today to inform the house that nominations are now open for the prestigious WA Disability Support Awards 2021. The WA Disability Support Awards are in their thirteenth year and recognise and celebrate the contribution of Western Australians who demonstrate excellence, passion and commitment in supporting people with disability. A high-quality workforce that strengthens, safeguards and provides greater choice for people with disability is a vital part of building quality disability services throughout Western Australia.

The awards showcase the very best approaches and help the disability sector attract, recruit and retain a capable and committed workforce. The awards recognise those who go beyond ordinary standards of service and provide the highest standard of individualised support. They provide an opportunity to celebrate the significant contribution of individual workers and teams who support people with disability to achieve their goals and to exercise real choice and control.

This year the seven award categories are: Emerging Leader; Excellence in Home and Family Support; Excellence in Innovation; Excellence in Regional Support; Excellence in Rights Promotion—Supporting Choice, Control and Capacity Building; Excellence in Supporting Employment Outcomes; and Excellence in Supporting Inclusion and Citizenship.

In 2020, more than 160 nominations were received, but due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, unfortunately the annual gala dinner was cancelled. This year, with Western Australia bouncing back from the impact of COVID-19, there will once again be an opportunity for the disability sector to come together and celebrate our dedicated and committed disability support workers and teams. I am very much looking forward to my first WA Disability Support Awards as Minister for Disability Services. I encourage members to promote these important awards in their electorates and, of course, to nominate individual workers or teams who they know are making a real difference in the lives of people with disability, their families and carers. Nominations can be made by going to [www.dswa.org.au](http://www.dswa.org.au).