

BREASTSCREEN WA — REGIONS

676. Ms J.L. HANNS to the Minister for Health:

I refer to the McGowan government's commitment to supporting cancer services, in particular those that deliver early detection and screening of breast cancer.

- (1) With this month being Breast Cancer Awareness Month, can the minister update the house on the important work of BreastScreen WA, particularly for women living in regional Western Australia?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house how the government is supporting the organisation?

Ms A. SANDERSON replied:

I thank the member for Collie–Preston for her question.

- (1)–(2) October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Members would have seen the BreastScreen WA van outside Parliament House this week. I am pleased to say that it is doing a roaring trade. It is very busy. It is so busy I could not get an appointment!

The SPEAKER: I believe we have extended the times or days.

Ms A. SANDERSON: That is a sign of having more women in the Parliament and more women in the building, which is a great thing.

Here in WA, breast cancer screening service offers mammograms every two years for women over 40 years old, and women aged between 50 and 74 years are encouraged to attend every year, and receive a personalised letter. We know that women have a one in seven risk of developing breast cancer in their lifetimes, which means four women in this place will likely develop breast cancer, if they have not already. It is a risk that increases with age, and the screening test can detect very small cancers, as small as a grain of rice, before you can even feel a lump. This literally saves lives. Each year BreastScreen WA celebrates Australian Breast Cancer Awareness Month by hosting the Pink Ribbon Breakfast, and I thank my parliamentary colleagues for attending this year and representing me.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is also an opportunity to reflect on the disease, to support women and their families journeying through breast cancer and to deliver awareness raising activities through the month of October through a range of forums. We have 10 breast screening clinics in the metropolitan area, permanent clinics in Bunbury and Albany and mobile clinics across the state. BreastScreen WA visits 100 regional and rural towns every two years, and appointments in our regions come available about one month beforehand. The state government continues to be a strong supporter of cancer-preventive initiatives, and it is a priority of this government to expand these important, early detecting services.

Last financial year, BreastScreen WA screened over 130 000 women, and it has a range of resources for women to access. Although we cannot prevent breast cancer, we can catch it early and increase our chances of successful treatment. I encourage everyone who is eligible to make sure that they reach out and get screened.