

WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [2.10 pm]: I want to just make it very clear that the Michael Murray the Attorney General just mentioned is not me!

I am pleased to inform the house that yesterday, 15 June, was World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. According to the United Nations, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is the day on which the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted on some of our older generations. It is an important day for us all to make a stand against all forms of abuse against older people in our community. Elder abuse is any act that causes harm to an older person within a relationship of trust, such as family or friends. It is a significant issue and may involve financial, social, physical, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse. Elder abuse affects one in 20 older Western Australians of all backgrounds, with devastating effects on victims, their families and communities.

Our population is ageing and as the number of older people increases, the incidence of elder abuse also increases. Older people may be at greater risk of elder abuse during COVID-19 due to potential impacts of physical isolation, particularly in regional communities. A whole-of-community commitment and action to prevent and address elder abuse is essential. With the launch in November 2019 of the state's first ever elder abuse prevention strategy and \$1.2 million allocated this financial year, much is being done. The McGowan government is working in partnership with the community sector to promote the interests of older Western Australians, raise awareness to protect seniors and minimise potential impacts of the pandemic. Information on COVID-19 and support services for seniors is also available on the Department of Communities website. COVID-19 also means that this year World Elder Abuse Awareness Day will be acknowledged in a different way. Members may have seen last night that Optus Stadium and the Matagarup Bridge were lit up in purple, as purple is the symbolic colour of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Over the course of this week, Yagan Square, the Bell Tower, Elizabeth Quay and Perth Council House will also be lit up in purple. I am sure that members have noticed the magnificent Purple Road display in the foyer on the first level. I would like to thank the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre and its many volunteers for creating this beautiful symbol of positive ageing. I encourage all members to take a photo of it and post it on social media, and to help raise awareness of this important issue.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the many community organisations, including Advocare, the Council on the Ageing Western Australia and the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre, for working tirelessly every day to combat and prevent elder abuse.

If someone you know is experiencing elder abuse, please call the Elder Abuse Helpline on 1300 724 679.