

DEMENTIA AWARENESS MONTH

Statement by Minister for Seniors and Ageing

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Seniors and Ageing) [12.12 pm]: I rise to inform the house that September is Dementia Awareness Month. In Australia, nearly half a million people are living with dementia, with over 41 000 diagnosed in Western Australia. That number is expected to more than double within the next two decades. Of that 41 000, 93 per cent are aged 65 years and over. The theme for Dementia Awareness Month is “Together we can ensure no-one faces dementia alone”. Although dementia care is primarily provided by the Department of Health, we are working holistically as a government to improve the lives of people with dementia. I am pleased to announce that the Department of Communities’ age-friendly communities grants program has now expanded to include dementia-friendly initiatives. Funding of up to \$15 000 per project is available for local governments and incorporated not-for-profit community organisations to implement age-friendly, active–positive ageing, and dementia-friendly strategies. Funding can be used towards education and awareness materials, innovative pilot projects, and community engagement programs such as Memory Cafes. This program forms part of the McGowan government’s commitment to ensuring seniors living with dementia are supported in the community. With approximately 70 per cent of people diagnosed with dementia living at home, it is vital that local communities are supporting those diagnosed with dementia so they are able to live actively and safely in their communities. The social stigma associated with a dementia diagnosis can be devastating. Increased community understanding of dementia will allow people to continue to participate in the activities they enjoy and reduce social isolation. I urge everyone to take the opportunity during Dementia Awareness Month to reach out to people with dementia in their community to let them know they are not alone.