

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Statement by Minister for Volunteering

MR M.P. MURRAY (Collie–Preston — Minister for Volunteering) [2.07 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that this week is National Volunteer Week, an annual celebration of Australian volunteers. This year's theme is "Changing Communities. Changing Lives." This theme speaks of the selfless contribution that Western Australian volunteers make to the community each year. These volunteers create, support and sustain services and activities that are essential to our communities. The importance of volunteers to Western Australia is evident now more than ever. Thousands of Western Australian volunteers have stepped up to support our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This demonstrates the kind and generous attitude of Western Australians to put their hands up and help the community in a time of crisis and uncertainty. I think I speak for all members of the house in expressing thanks and gratitude to them. These volunteers deliver essential services and activities to support our most vulnerable through this challenging time such as telephone wellbeing checks, urgent household maintenance, essential transportation and grocery and medication deliveries.

I would like to acknowledge and promote Volunteering WA's new emergency volunteering website that matches volunteers to emergency responses by community organisations and local governments. To date, 4 000 Western Australians have registered online to provide crucial support to community members during this public health emergency. This new measure shows just how important volunteers are in ensuring that community members stay safe and healthy in this uncertain time. I commend Volunteering WA on its hard work in developing this important resource.

COVID-19 has meant that this year's National Volunteer Week events and awards have not been possible. The WA Volunteer of the Year Awards, a highlight of National Volunteer Week, has been postponed until later in the year. Volunteering WA will announce a new date in the coming weeks.

Volunteering Australia and Volunteering WA have refocused their efforts to celebrate volunteers through a virtual campaign. Across Western Australia, many organisations are recognising and thanking their volunteers through virtual coffees, dinner parties, awards ceremonies, competitions and other activities. I encourage all Western Australian organisations to follow this example by thanking their volunteers and acknowledging their generous contribution through online events and activities, social media and other digital platforms. It is important that we continue to promote the value and significant contribution of volunteering to the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of Western Australia, and more so now than ever. Once again, I would like to acknowledge volunteers for their tireless efforts in supporting Western Australian communities.