

LYMPHOEDEMA ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

Statement by Member for Vasse

MS L. METTAM (Vasse — Leader of the Liberal Party) [12.49 pm]: I rise to shine a light on the excellent work undertaken by the Lymphoedema Association Australia to help those living with the chronic disease of lymphoedema by providing information, treatment and the support required to live well. March has been designated Shine a Light on Lymphoedema month to raise awareness for those suffering from this condition and to raise funds for a dedicated phone line to provide further support for those living with lymphoedema.

Lymphoedema is a breakdown in the lymphatic system that results in chronic and permanent swelling of one or more body parts. It is more than just a physical condition, as it can be debilitating and disfiguring, affecting people physically, emotionally, psychologically and financially. It is conservatively estimated that around 70 000 people in Australia are living with lymphoedema. This number is only estimated because the condition is often unreported or confused with other conditions in its early stages. This is why Shine a Light on Lymphoedema in March is so important. Landmarks across Western Australia will be lit up in blue in recognition of lymphoedema. People at greatest risk of developing lymphoedema are often already suffering from conditions such as cancer, trauma and cellulitis. Lymphoedema can also be hereditary. Some of the common signs and symptoms are swelling to a part of the body and feelings of heaviness and tension. It is important that lymphoedema is diagnosed professionally to exclude other causes of oedema, or swelling.

I encourage Western Australians to get behind this very important awareness campaign. I also congratulate all those at LAA for the wonderful work that they do on behalf of many others.