

## **HARMONY WEEK**

*Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests*

**MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests)** [9.07 am]: I would like to advise the house that tomorrow, 15 March 2019, is the beginning of Western Australia's annual Harmony Week. Harmony Week is a state government multicultural community relations initiative that runs from 15 to 21 March every year. Harmony Week encourages every Western Australian to explore and appreciate our wealth of cultural, faith, linguistic and ethnic diversity. Harmony Week is a time to celebrate Australia's cultural diversity and its many benefits. At the same time, it is important that we acknowledge that ongoing effort is needed to ensure that racism, prejudice and discrimination does not find a foothold in our society. To mix awareness raising with equipping people with information, the Office of Multicultural Interests has developed a Harmony Week Kit, which outlines the background and objectives of the week, and suggests how schools, workplaces and communities can get involved.

The Office of Multicultural Interests, through its community grants program, is supporting 14 community Harmony Week events across the state, including regional events in Katanning and the goldfields. The concluding day for Harmony Week, 21 March, coincides with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which was established in remembrance of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre—a key turning point in the downfall of apartheid in South Africa. To mark this day, the Office of Multicultural Interests will hold its annual Harmony Week debate. Panellists for the debate have been selected from WA universities, and the audience will include years 10 and 11 students from five WA public, private and independent schools.

I am happy to advise that due to our advocacy, the Australian government has now taken Western Australia's lead and has changed the Australia-wide celebration of multiculturalism from Harmony Day to Harmony Week. To mark Harmony Week, a number of public buildings will be lit in orange throughout the week, including Parliament House, the Bell Tower, Elizabeth Quay, Trafalgar Bridge, Optus Stadium and Matagarup Bridge.

The Harmony Week Kit and calendar of events are available from OMI's website. I urge all Western Australians to join Harmony Week celebrations and participate in as many events as possible.