

RAMADAN

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [9.16 am]: I inform the house that the Islamic holy month of Ramadan begins today. Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar, which is a lunar calendar based on the cycles of the moon. Observances begin in the morning after the crescent moon is visibly sighted, marking the beginning of the new month. Ramadan is the month of fasting, and for practising Muslims it is a time for contemplation, worship, prayers, good deeds and charity.

Fasting in the month of Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. The other four pillars are declaration of faith, five daily prayers, giving alms or charity and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Healthy adult Muslims are required to refrain from consuming all foods and liquids and sinful conduct from sunrise to sunset every day during Ramadan. The fast is broken at sunset each day with a meal, also called iftar, which is a very social event, with family and community members. It is common for people to host others for dinner or to gather as a community to share the meal.

For members of our Parliament, a highlight of the month of Ramadan is the parliamentary iftar dinner, which is held here in Parliament House. This year's parliamentary iftar dinner will be hosted by Mr Chris Tallentire, MLA, and Mr Ian Blayney, MLA, and is an exceptional opportunity for cross-cultural interaction, networking and intercultural dialogue. The annual parliamentary iftar dinner is organised by the Intercultural Harmony Society and in the last six years has been supported through the Office of Multicultural Interests. The dinner is always popular and is attended by a variety of people, including parliamentarians, faith and community leaders from many different communities, academics, journalists and students. I strongly encourage members to attend the dinner as it offers valuable insight into the importance of Ramadan to our Muslim communities.

The Intercultural Harmony Society is once again organising a series of home dinners at which members of the wider community are welcomed into Muslim homes to experience iftar firsthand. This Ramadan, families from across our diverse Muslim communities will be hosting more than 30 home dinners. The Intercultural Harmony Society hopes to increase the number of these dinners in the future.

On behalf of the state government, I wish all Western Australian Muslims and, indeed, Muslims around the world, a peaceful month of Ramadan.

Ramadan Kareem!