

REFUGEE WEEK

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [9.03 am]: I would like to bring to the attention of the house the fact that Australia is currently celebrating Refugee Week, which runs this year from Sunday, 16 June to Saturday, 22 June. Refugee Week is Australia's peak annual activity to raise awareness about the issues affecting refugees and to focus on the positive contributions made by refugees to all levels of Australian society. First celebrated in 1986, Refugee Week coincides with World Refugee Day on 20 June, which was first coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in 2001.

Western Australia is a state built on migration. From its earliest days, the successful growth of this state was founded on its First Peoples, followed by settlers from the United Kingdom and, later on, migrants from every part of the globe. This diverse heritage has made Western Australia the robust, vigorous and prosperous culturally diverse state that we enjoy today. Migrants bring with them their skills, their cultural heritage and their willingness to work together to forge a new land of opportunity. Many of these migrants have been refugees. Refugees do not arrive alone. They bring with them their passion to make a success of their lives, to build a good life for their family, and to contribute to their new homeland in every way that they can.

The theme for Refugee Week 2019 is "A world of stories". Every refugee looking for safety brings their own story of why they left home, their journey and, in some cases, finding safety in Australia. The sharing of stories is an opportunity to not only remember and honour their journey, but also enable the wider Australian community to better understand the courage and contribution that refugees make.

Refugee Week 2019 is being celebrated by a series of events across the community, including at libraries, schools, colleges and universities, non-government organisations and at the cinema and on television. Many of the events use stories and songs to celebrate the contributions that refugees have made to the development of Western Australia and this nation as a whole. To mark Refugee Week, I am pleased to announce that the McGowan government has introduced access to concession fares on public transport for asylum seekers in Perth, similar to those available to seniors, veterans, Centrelink recipients and students.