

DIWALI FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS — PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.19 pm]: I am pleased to inform the house that one of Western Australia's most exciting annual community festivals is about to begin. Diwali, or Deepavali, also known as the Festival of Lights, is celebrated throughout India and in every part of the world where there is a significant Indian community. With its joyful messages of compassion, selflessness, harmony and acceptance, Diwali is a festival that resonates strongly in our successful multicultural society. There are two main Diwali celebrations here in Western Australia, apart from the many family, business and local community events that take place. The colourful and hugely popular Swan Festival of Lights is now in its tenth year and will attract large crowds to the Supreme Court Gardens from this Friday, 13 October until Sunday, 15 October. The Indian Society of WA also draws huge crowds to the fantastic Diwali Mela carnival. This year the event will run for two days, on 21 and 22 October, at Claremont Showgrounds. Both these celebrations are proudly sponsored by the McGowan government through the Office of Multicultural Interests. The Swan Festival of Lights received \$15 000 and the Indian Society of WA \$10 000, both through the community grants program.

For a third year, Parliament House is again joining in the celebrations. I was proud to host the Diwali and Hindu New Year celebrations here at Parliament House yesterday. This special celebration, organised by the worldwide Indian community association BAPS—Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan—was very well attended and it was a pleasure to see so many members of the house attending and enjoying the festive atmosphere. Parliament House will be floodlit in orange for a week from 13 to 20 October to indicate the state's recognition of the achievements and contributions of Western Australia's Indian communities. I urge all members of the house and all Western Australians to take the time to attend at least one Festival of Lights event this year.

On behalf of the McGowan state government, I wish all members of the Western Australian Indian communities, and everyone here today, happiness, peace and prosperity for Diwali.