

CHINESE NEW YEAR — VIETNAMESE NEW YEAR — CELEBRATIONS

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [9.09 am]: I would like to inform the house that celebrations for the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Dog begin this weekend. The Year of the Earth Dog will run from 16 February 2018 to 4 February 2019.

Northbridge will again be a major focus of celebration with the Chung Wah Association's spectacular Perth Chinese New Year Fair taking place on Sunday, 18 February. The fair consistently draws crowds of more than 80 000 people throughout the day and entertains festivalgoers from all backgrounds and lifestyles with lion and dragon dances, food stalls, a multicultural concert, competitions, cultural demonstrations and activities for all ages.

The following weekend will see Tet, the Vietnamese Lunar New Year Festival, transform the Wanneroo Showgrounds into a major Vietnamese cultural hub. Tet is organised annually by the Vietnamese Community in Australia, WA Chapter, and takes place over two days on Friday, 23 February and Saturday, 24 February. These are Perth's two peak new year festivals, and I am pleased to say that both have been supported by the McGowan Labor government through grants from the Office of Multicultural Interests, Lotterywest and Healthway. However, these are not the only activities welcoming in the Year of the Dog. Celebrations will take place across the city and across the state, with community festivals, morning teas, school projects, themed dinners, forums and more. Many shopping centres are holding special events and festivities, and a large number of restaurants are offering festive menus. Chambers of commerce are holding new year celebration events for their members, as are many consulates.

One of the pleasures of living in a multicultural society is that our many culturally and linguistically diverse communities go beyond traditional celebrations with family and friends and share their festivities with all of us. Western Australia enjoys the many benefits of these large, inclusive community festivities, which are an opportunity for everyone to explore and embrace our rich cultural diversity and the many social and economic benefits it brings to us all. It is my pleasure to wish all Chinese Western Australians and Chinese communities around the globe a happy new year and hope that the Year of the Earth Dog will bring you all good health and prosperity.