

LANGUAGES WEEK

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.10 pm]: I inform the house that Western Australia's Languages Week is in full swing right now. Languages Week is the centrepiece of the year-long Languages in the Mainstream program run by the Modern Language Teachers' Association of WA with support from the McGowan government through the Office of Multicultural Interests. The program supports the strategy to boost language education in government schools through the Department of Education, and has featured events throughout the past 12 months to promote language learning.

Languages Week 2017 is the culmination of this program, and I hope that it will be an annual event for many years to come. Currently, more than 270 languages and dialects, including Aboriginal languages and languages from all over the world, are spoken in Western Australia. The ability to speak a language other than English in this context and, indeed, in a global context, is of immense benefit to us as individuals, communities and the state as a whole. The Languages Week initiative gives everyone an opportunity to celebrate this amazing wealth of linguistic diversity, and to think about the many benefits of learning another language.

Learning a second or third language helps us broaden our personal, social, cultural and employment opportunities. In a modern economy, linguistic knowledge and the cultural competency that comes with this knowledge are increasingly recognised as key skills that provide an advantage in an increasingly competitive market. The McGowan government is proud to support WA Languages Week and is committed to enhancing language learning in both mainstream education and the community language schools sector. To support the sector, the community languages program administered by the Office of Multicultural Interests provides funding and support to community language schools and offers language teaching outside school hours to school-age students from kindergarten to year 12. Languages Week runs from 7 to 14 August 2017 and I encourage all members of the house to investigative activities being held in schools, workplaces and communities across the state.