

AUSTRALIA–AFRICA WEEK

Statement by Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Citizenship and Multicultural Interests) [12.08 pm]: In advance of my statement, can I acknowledge in the Speaker's gallery Mr Prosper Baeni, a constituent from the member for Thornlie's electorate.

I would like to inform the house that Australia–Africa Week is now in progress and runs until Saturday, 7 September. Australia–Africa Week is growing in size and scope every year and is an opportunity to celebrate the many ties between Australia and countries across the African continent. The week, which is organised by the African Women's Council of Australia, provides a fascinating chance to discover a taste of the cultures, skills and business activities of many Western Australian communities from African backgrounds. Developed around the Africa Down Under conference, Australia–Africa Week features events and activities that explore the economic and cultural links between WA and African countries. The Africa Down Under conference is the largest African mining-focused event outside of Africa and attracts government ministers, senior officials, businesspeople, investors, executives and media from all over the African continent each year. Australia–Africa Week taps into this network to promote activities and cooperation in areas outside the mining sector, such as tourism, education, business and trade.

With the support of the McGowan government, the Australia–Africa Week, which was originally a one-day event, has expanded into a full week of Africa-focused events that promote and advance relations between the two continents. Australia–Africa Week also shines a spotlight on many Western Australian communities from African backgrounds—their achievements, diversity, cultural richness and links to Africa itself. Australia–Africa Week events taking place in Perth this year include the Australia–Africa Trade and Cultural Expo 2019 in Yagan Square on Friday, 6 and Saturday, 7 September; the Women in Leadership Forum for Economic Empowerment; the WA African Communities Awards Gala 2019; the Australia–Africa Universities Network Forum and conferences held by Murdoch University and the University of Western Australia. An important part of the week is the Parliamentary Friends of Africa event, here at Parliament House, which provides an opportunity for Western Australian community leaders from African backgrounds and government officials and business representatives from African nations to meet with members of the Western Australian Parliament.

Western Australians from African backgrounds make significant contributions to this state in every field of endeavour, including culture and festivals, business and entrepreneurship, education, sport, music and the arts, and through service to the community. I strongly encourage members to get involved in the African whirlwind that is sweeping across Perth until 7 September.