

WA Government Acts on Wellness

While some of the criticisms of our health system are well founded, and the long waiting list for so-called elective surgery is certainly an area that warrants examination, we should always give credit where it is due. The State Government's recent allocation of funding for health promotion campaigns and projects is one such initiative that deserves praise.

Our 2006-7 Pre Budget Submission focused not on illness and its treatment but on wellness and recommended that the government take steps to maintain good health and active ageing. We would rather see illness avoided than treated. Money devoted to activities that prevent pain and suffering is money well spent, and a good investment. A little prevention is better, and cheaper than a lot of curative medicine.

This is not to say that there should not be treatment available when it is needed. On the contrary, keeping people fit and well releases money for those who suffer unavoidable ill health, frees hospital beds and makes better use of the skill and expertise of health professionals.

Living Longer Living Stronger is a prime example of a health promotion activity that enables individuals to improve and maintain their health. An external evaluation conducted by Edith Cowan University's Professor Rob Newton has demonstrated the benefits of this program. The many calls we receive praising the program are further evidence of its success. Government has recognised this by allocating funds over the next three years which will enable us to further develop and expand the program to reach a target of 10000 seniors participating in Living Longer Living Stronger every week.

On behalf of the many current participants and those who will join the program in the coming years, thank you, Minister for Health, for making a commitment to our vision of wellness.

For details of where you can join Living Longer Living Stronger, phone COTA (WA) on 9321 2133.