



Speech by

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AGED CARE

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (10.09 p.m.): With the ageing of our population, we face the challenge of how we will care for the frail and vulnerable in our community, not only now but also into the future. The base of employed people is shrinking relative to the unemployed, particularly the frail and the elderly. There is a lot of talk about policies that may help to address this. One point of discussion is that we should be encouraging people to work longer. As people's quality of life and health outcomes improve relative to what they were in the past, that does occur and people enjoy that option.

It is time we had greater dialogue about how to effectively manage the ageing in our community in a way that provides quality of life outcomes and recognises the challenges but provides more creative solutions than have been looked at to date. For example, I understand that there are countries in Asia that provide mortgage breaks and other taxation incentives to encourage families who genuinely want to assist in keeping their aged relatives with them for longer. While I realise that would not suit every family, it is needs to be discussed in families and in the community if we are to truly be caring communities that do not want a crisis to hit us in the future that we cannot manage. We need to discuss age planning with our elderly relatives—and well before a crisis hits their lives—the options of appropriate accommodation that they would like to have in place. I am seeking to work with all levels of government on the better planning of accommodation in our communities.

For example, I believe that local governments need to review their policies in regard to carers units and cottages, realising that this is the way of the future. If we are to have a community that truly cares for one other, we should not isolate people to semi-institutions; rather, we should seek to have people remain in the community, recognising that they still want a certain degree of independence but making sure that accommodation choices are available.

I urge local, state and federal governments to look at all the options to help people care for the elderly in our community and to do so in a way which allows families who wish to participate in that process to not carry an undue burden towards that end. There must be more creative solutions than we have found to date. I urge all levels of government to start examining particularly the accommodation options. We need more nursing homes, hostel places and services such as respite care for carers and for loved ones. Let us look at the range of accommodation options so that we are in a better position to deal with these issues.
