




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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**SUPERANNUATION (STATE PUBLIC SECTOR) (SCHEME ADMINISTRATION)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (3.33 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the Superannuation (State Public Sector) (Scheme Administration) Amendment Bill 2021. This bill will facilitate the merger between QSuper and Sunsuper to create the second largest superannuation fund in Australia, with two million members and an estimated \$200 billion in net assets. Our government has supported this merger under the condition that it is in the best interest of QSuper and Sunsuper members—that means quite a lot of Queenslanders—and it will be good for our state and everyone in it.

Importantly, the merged fund will be headquartered in Queensland, meaning that 2,000 jobs will be kept in the state. The merger will lead to better superannuation outcomes for members with larger returns and lower fees due to reduced administration costs and improved investment performance. The fund's scale and diversity of membership will mean more expanded investment opportunities for Queensland and greater capacity to create new and innovative financial services and products. This will enhance financial returns for members and provide them with more income to spend in their retirement years. This will have added flow-on benefits for our local economies as retirees spend more money on local businesses and services.

Importantly, the new merged entity will retain its status as a profit-for-members fund, rather than having its profits ending up in the hands of shareholders. This means the funds will be working in the best financial interests of their members, and members will have peace of mind knowing that they will have a secure income when they retire.

Security of income in retirement years is crucially important for everyone, but especially for women. Women currently retire with 47 per cent less superannuation than men. Even in this day and age, women are usually the ones who have to take time out of the workforce to care for children or older family members. They are more likely to be employed part-time to fit in childcare arrangements. More concerningly, women are still earning lower than average salaries than men—even women who have graduated in the same professions as men and working in the same roles. Women deserve to retire with an income that guarantees a dignified and secure retirement.

While 44 per cent of women currently rely on their partners' income during retirement, a husband is not a plan. Changing demographics are seeing larger numbers of older single women who are entering their retirement years with lower than average super. More disturbingly, 40 per cent of older single retired women now live in poverty and experience economic insecurity in retirement. Many of these women may not own their own home and are forced to compete in an overpriced rental market. They struggle to pay bills and sometimes struggle with ill health which impacts their financial security. Some of those women have forged successful Public Service careers, and some of them have worked on the front lines of our hospitals as nurses and midwives. They deserve to live out their retirement years on a decent income that affords them a good quality of life.

When the Keating Labor government introduced the compulsory superannuation scheme in 1992, it allowed millions of hardworking Australians to retire with dignity and security. It came at a time when more women were entering the workforce and it provided women with the opportunity of having a secure safety net upon retirement rather than forcing them onto the age pension. It included rollover provisions which ensured women who left the workforce to have children could maintain their superannuation coverage ensuring that their super could grow into an adequate sum upon retirement.

The Queensland Labor government supports the ethos of a national compulsory superannuation scheme for all hardworking Australians to provide them with a high standard of living in their retirement years. One of the conditions that our government has maintained in supporting this merger was to ensure that the merger was in the best interests of members.

Queensland government employees can be assured that this bill will preserve their existing QSuper entitlements and benefits, including those of defined benefit members. Any changes that impact on member benefits, member contributions or government contributions can only proceed with the consent of the treasurer of the day. Our government's guarantee regarding defined benefit entitlements will continue to be enshrined in legislation.

I welcome the commitment from QSuper and Sunsuper to providing employment security for the existing workforces with all staff below senior management given assurance of their ongoing employment for at least two years. The merged fund will also attract new jobs for skilled professionals in investment, information technology and customer engagement. It will also reinforce Queensland as an attractive place for new businesses to invest in.

I want to thank the Treasurer for his work in introducing this bill. I want to thank QSuper and Sunsuper for committing to ensuring that the merger works in the best interests of its members and for Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.