



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 May 2023

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Seniors

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (5.57 pm): I figured I would run to the box, Mr Acting Speaker, because I was ready to go. Today in Queensland almost 900,000 people are aged 65 years or older. By 2050 seniors are expected to make up nearly a quarter of the population, or 22 per cent, or 1.8 million people. The Palaszczuk government is committed to creating an age-friendly Queensland where seniors feel connected, cared for and supported. We want them to be able to live, enjoy and contribute to their communities in a way that suits them.

We acknowledge that one of the biggest challenges that faces older Queenslanders is cost-of-living pressures. The Palaszczuk government provides \$725 million for concessions and rebates that support Queensland seniors. For example, a retired couple in their 70s living in their own home with no dependants, both with a Queensland Seniors Card and on the pension will receive concessions including a \$372 electricity rebate and a \$175 cost-of-living rebate on their power bill. If they own a car, they could receive a reduction of around \$174 on the annual registration of a small four-cylinder vehicle. As ratepayers, they may be eligible for a 20 per cent state government subsidy, up to a maximum of \$200. That is more than \$900 in savings.

Last night the Albanese federal budget delivered some direct benefits that seniors may be eligible for including energy relief of up to \$500 a year, cheaper medicine, more GPs bulk-billing for pensioners and healthcare cardholders, and other benefits that support seniors. Today we held a seniors forum and a seniors community afternoon tea here at the Cairns Convention Centre as part of regional parliament. I want to thank all the seniors who made the time and effort to come along as well as the Premier, who came along with me to say hi.

As we do at all of our seniors expos across the state, we ask them to contribute to a survey that will inform our next seniors strategy. It helps us to empower them, amplify their voices and deliver what Queenslanders want as we age. Through the seniors strategy survey it has been invaluable to hear from older Queenslanders about what is important to them, their experiences and their aspirations. Since April 2021 about 4,200 people have completed the survey in person or online, and tonight I can reveal the latest findings from the survey.

It shows that Queensland seniors rate health care, cost of living, independence, mobility and staying in their own home as what matters most to people aged over 65. Eighty-one per cent said they could get out and about easily using their own vehicle or affordable user-friendly transport. Sixty-seven per cent felt confident accessing information they needed to stay informed and connected with their community, family and friends.

While there is much to celebrate in the survey findings, older Queenslanders also shared their concerns, with 72 per cent of respondents referring to health care as a top priority. Other concerns were the cost of living, at 68 per cent; maintaining independence and mobility, at 55 per cent; and staying in their own home, at 54 per cent. The survey results confirm how much the increasing cost of living continues to weigh on older Queenslanders. That is why the Palaszczuk government continues to support Queensland seniors.