



Speech By  
**Hon. Charis Mullen**


**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Seniors**

 **Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.51 am): It has been a big few weeks as Queensland's Minister for Seniors. Last week we announced that grants are now open for events to celebrate this year's Seniors Month in October. This year's theme is 'Love getting older in Queensland', supporting older Queenslanders to share their love for connections, for sports and the great outdoors, for family and friends, for learning and caring for others and for volunteering. There is a \$100,000 pool for organisations to dip into for events and activities to celebrate Queensland seniors. This month-long program of events is part of our commitment to building an age-friendly community.

We know our population of older people is growing, especially in regional and rural areas. We know that for a significant number of Queenslanders growing old means growing loneliness. Around 53 per cent of our seniors are women. We know that women have also traditionally outlived husbands and partners, which can worsen loneliness. The health and wellbeing of older women in Queensland is a priority for our government, not a distraction. Social isolation has a profound impact on their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing. It can lower their quality of life and make existing health conditions worse, which is why I was thrilled to announce that the Miles government is providing an additional \$12.5 million funding over five years from 2024-25 for Seniors Social Isolation Grants. These grants are available statewide with a focus on additional investment for rural and remote communities, First Nations communities and areas where extra need has been identified.

Last month I was honoured to join some fabulous older Queenslanders at the Southern Gold Coast 60 and Better program on the Gold Coast to announce the grants. It gave me a wonderful opportunity to see firsthand the benefits of the Seniors Social Isolation Program. There were games of Scrabble and Monopoly being played, nature walks being planned and a terrific lunch club that I have been invited to go back to. Activities like these are happening across our state, from tai chi, yoga and Pilates to table tennis, chat circles and help with mobile phones and computer skills. These are just some of the practical ways that the Miles government is supporting our Queensland seniors. We have also embarked on our highly successful seniors expos and seniors savings pop-ups for 2024. I was pleased to join 120 of our seniors and pensioners at the Logan Diggers Services Club with the Deputy Premier and member for Woodridge for our first seniors expo. They loved the scones, but even more they loved the many savings and rebates available to pensioners and seniors—up to \$1,072 off their electricity, up to 50 per cent off their public transport, up to 50 per cent off their vehicle registration and a free pair of glasses every two years under the Spectacle Supply Scheme and so much more.

In the past three years more than 16,000 senior Queenslanders have attended one of these events. As the expos roll out across the state we also have the return of our very popular seniors savings pop-up events. They are starting at Westfield centres this month and will be in North Lakes, Chermside,

Garden City, Carindale and Coomera. These pop-ups give seniors the chance to meet with a Queensland government cards and concession specialist and will be set up across the state in 2024. The Miles government values the incredible contribution older Queenslanders make to our state and their wellbeing is one of our highest priorities.