




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) (10.12 am): Queensland's population is aging. Around 17 per cent of our population is aged 65 and over and it is estimated this will rise to more than 20 per cent by 2050. As these changes occur, we are more committed than ever to looking after our seniors and ensuring our state is a safe place for them.

Seniors have the right to feel safe and to be safe at home and in their communities. They need more than slogans. That is why we are helping eligible seniors aged 60 and over in Townsville, Mount Isa, Cairns, Toowoomba, Tablelands and Mareeba to secure their homes. I am pleased to see that, through the release of our Community Safety Plan, this trial program is expanding. Grants of up to \$10,000 can help subsidise practical home security improvements, which are particularly important right now given that many seniors are experiencing cost-of-living pressures. They can strengthen window locks and shutters, install CCTV cameras and address other security weaknesses around their homes.

We also want to make sure our older Queenslanders are living with dignity and have trust and respect in their relationships. Sadly, we know that is not always the case. Elder abuse is abhorrent. That is why we are investing \$8.6 million in 2023-24 on elder abuse prevention and intervention services. This includes more than \$769,000 to deliver the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit and helpline. The helpline provides information and advice about the many types of elder abuse, which can include coercive control, physical abuse, abandonment, emotional abuse and financial abuse. The helpline also offers referral and community support to respond to that type of abuse. It also includes \$7.2 million for seniors' legal and support services in 16 locations across our state.

I have had the opportunity to visit a number of amazing services that we fund across Queensland. I have spent time with the fantastic team at TASC Legal and Social Justice Services in Toowoomba, who shared with me examples of the client cases they are working on. I visited the hardworking Cairns Community Legal Centre team, who spoke with me about the additional challenges of distance for older Queenslanders living in the Far North and on the cape and the work they are doing with regular visits to those areas. I also dropped in to meet with the Relationships Australia team on the Sunshine Coast, who have seen their work sadly grow when it comes to supporting seniors with legal and financial support.

I encourage any senior who needs help to reach out and find out how we can assist, whether it be with security measures around the home or taking back control in their relationships. Seniors contribute so much to our state and we remain committed to doing all we can to keep them safe.