




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) (10.19 am): This month I had the pleasure of attending one of our very popular seniors expos in Caloundra with the equally popular member for Caloundra. It was positively buzzing with activity as more than 100 seniors joined us to learn more about the many rebates, concessions and services on offer by our government, so I could not think of anywhere better to release our Queensland Seniors Strategy 2024-2029—our blueprint for an age-friendly state. We want a state that embraces older people and recognises the enormous value they contribute to our families, neighbourhoods and the wider community—a state where older residents are connected, cared for and celebrated.

The strategy is driven by actions representing more than \$10 billion worth of investment across Queensland to help meet the infrastructure, services and support needs of an aging population. A key initiative under the strategy is our seniors social isolation program, which will receive funding of \$33 million over five years. Under the latest round of grants, \$12.5 million will be provided to deliver extra programs and services, particularly in regional and rural areas, to prevent older Queenslanders feeling isolated. I have had the privilege of seeing how valuable this investment is around our state. On the Gold Coast there were walking groups and cycling adventures alongside equally energetic board games and yoga classes. In Rockhampton I joined the 60 and Better group with the member for Rockhampton. Competitive card games and good conversations were the order of the day.

We know that these programs are working and we know that more needs to be done. Our Seniors Strategy was informed by more than 16,000 seniors, their families and carers from across the state. Three themes emerged: seniors want to be connected to their communities and the people and services that matter to them; they want to be cared for and supported by the world-class frontline services we provide; and they want to be recognised and celebrated for their significant economic and social contributions.

The first year of the new strategy includes a record \$1 billion investment in concessions for Seniors Card holders and other eligible Queenslanders. This includes the very popular electricity rebate of up to \$1,672 for our eligible seniors, which we know means that most will not pay for electricity this financial year. This strategy and its supporting action plan will help us create Australia's most age-friendly state because, under Labor, our Queensland seniors deserve nothing less.