

Question on Notice

No. 1082

Asked on Tuesday, 28 September 2004

MR MCNAMARA asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (**MR PITT**) -

QUESTION:

With reference to the many ageing Queensland parents who are carers - will he advise what is happening or will happen to assist ageing carers?

ANSWER:

Disability Services Queensland is committed to addressing the needs of families with adult children with disabilities as part of the substantial budget increase of \$69.9 million for 2004-05 which will provide more services across a range of programs. Assisting ageing parents who are carers to look after their adult children with disabilities and to help them plan for the future when they are no longer able to provide care is recognised as a crucial issue by the Queensland Government. It is an issue that will continue to grow as a result of our ageing population.

The Government has long been aware of the need to assist these parents to care for their sons and daughters and, just as importantly, provide options for their future care and accommodation. The Queensland Government Strategic Framework for the Disability Implementation Committee identified the issues facing ageing carers as a focus of concern for 2004.

In recognition of this, Disability Services Queensland's Family Support Program was expanded in 2003-04 to include families caring for their adult children in their home. This is of particular benefit to ageing parents. The program supports children and adults with high and complex disability support needs that are not being met by the existing service system, or where the family is at imminent risk of breakdown. A range of flexible and responsive supports is provided to strengthen a family's ability to care for family members with a disability, as well as the whole family.

The Government has not stopped there. The community consultation for the *Queensland Government Carer Recognition Policy* held throughout Queensland last year identified the difficulties encountered by ageing carers of adult children with disabilities. As a result, the issue of ageing carers has been identified by the Carer Recognition Interdepartmental Committee as a priority in the development of the action plan for the policy. The action plan for the policy will build on the work being undertaken by Disability Services Queensland to create genuine changes to the lives of Queenslanders with disabilities, their families and carers.

Ageing carers has also been identified as an area of joint interest on the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement (Bilateral Agreement) 2002-2007 and collaborative activities will be developed during the 2004-05 period. At the Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference in Hobart on 28 July 2004, Ministers agreed to commence negotiations on a Commonwealth Government budget initiative to meet demand for respite care for specific groups of ageing carers. It was also agreed to establish an advisory body comprising all jurisdictions to develop options for ageing carers to better plan for the future for their sons and daughters with a disability and to report back to Ministers.