

Question on Notice

No. 732

Asked on 17 October 2013

MR STEVENS asked the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (MS DAVIS)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise what assistance the government provides for people aged over 65 living in the Gold Coast region?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, funds the following seniors' support and participation programs on the Gold Coast.

- The Multicultural Seniors Program Gold Coast receives \$44,006 in State Government funding per annum to promote the participation of seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in community life. The Multicultural Seniors Program Gold Coast is operated by Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast.
- The Safe and Confident Living Program receives \$49,488 per annum to provide support for seniors who are experiencing loneliness or social isolation and require information and support to increase their participation in social and cultural development activities. The Safe and Confident Living Program is operated by Churches of Christ in Queensland.
- The Southern Gold Coast 60 and Better Program receives \$80,454 per annum to provide a range of social, educational and physical activities that enhance healthy ageing and encourage the participation of older people in the development and delivery of activities.

People aged over 65 can also access a range of services that are funded through this department and based on the Gold Coast, including Neighbourhood Centres, Emergency Relief payments, Family Support services, Individual Support services and Domestic and Family Violence services.

The Queensland Government also provides assistance to seniors living on the Gold Coast through a number of other mechanisms including:

- Seniors Enquiry Line, which is a state-wide information and referral service for older Queenslanders, grandparents and their family, friends and carers. For the cost of a local call, the Seniors Enquiry Line provides information on concessions, social activities, household assistance, retirement accommodation, financial and legal matters, health, education and transport.
- The Seniors Legal and Support Service provides free legal advice, information and social work services for people over 60. While no service centre is located on the Gold Coast, the service can provide support over the phone.
- The Elder Abuse helpline provides free and confidential advice for anyone experiencing elder abuse or who suspects someone they know may be experiencing elder abuse. It is open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

- Queensland Seniors Card is a partnership between the Queensland Government and participating Gold Coast businesses to provide discounts and Queensland Government concessions on a range of products and services to Queenslanders over 60. These concessions are designed to assist seniors across Queensland reduce the cost of regular household bills, access essential services, and maintain a healthy active lifestyle. Depending on particular circumstances, a person may be entitled to a Seniors Card, Seniors Business discount card, Carer Business Discount Card, or companion card to support them with their daily expenses.
- A range of concessions for seniors includes electricity and gas rebates, rates and water subsidies, medical and disability concessions, transport concessions, motor vehicle registration concessions, and emergent financial assistance.
- The Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme is available for low income households and concession card holders of any age who have experienced a short-term financial crisis or unforeseen emergency that has limited their ability to pay their current electricity or reticulated natural gas bills.
- Senior Shopper telephone shopping service is an initiative of the Queensland Government in partnership with the Queensland business community that helps Seniors Card and Seniors Business Discount Card holders obtain the best price on a range of goods and services. Senior Shopper can assist seniors to obtain a better price on items such as electrical goods, travel, motor vehicles, computers, mowers, power tools, furniture, white goods, lawn bowls gear, fishing tackle, pools and equipment, cameras and many other goods.
- The Queensland Government also provides support for grandparents who have the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren. The Time for Grandparents and Grandparents Information website is a bulletin board where people can share information and ideas. There is an information resource directory where seniors can search for services and grandparent support groups in the area and find information about Time for Grandparents program. There are Grandparent Weblinks to connect grandparents to information on other services.

More information is available on the Queensland Government website at www.qld.gov.au/seniors.