

Question on Notice

No. 1260

Asked on Wednesday 19 September 2018

MR J KELLY ASKED THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITIES AND MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES AND SENIORS (HON C O'ROURKE)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister provide an update on the Seniors Enquiry Line that was announced in this year's budget, with particular regard to the benefits for people who live in the electorate of Greenslopes?

ANSWER

UnitingCare Community operates the Queensland Government funded Seniors Enquiry Line, a statewide information and referral service for Queensland seniors, their families, friends, grandparents and carers. In 2018-19, the service has an allocated budget of \$370,105. One phone call links seniors with information on a broad range of topics including cards and concessions, social activities, household assistance, retirement accommodation, financial and legal matters, health, education, and transport matters amongst others. It is a very important service for seniors, assisting them to navigate what can be complex issues such as housing and financial matters.

The department is expanding the state-wide Seniors Enquiry Line to improve services throughout Queensland, including enhancing access to specific expertise and advice on a range of consumer protection issues and scams through funding of \$100,000 per annum over four years from 2016-17.

This additional funding was allocated to support implementation of Recommendation 22 from the *Inquiry into the adequacy of existing financial protections for Queensland's seniors*, Report No. 2, 55th Parliament, to increase older people's awareness of fraud and scams through the expansion of the Seniors Enquiry Line.

A 12 month staff training plan as well as accompanying resources have been developed to support the Seniors Enquiry Line helpline operators to deliver a comprehensive telephone service in the areas of scams, fraud and consumer issues.

The Seniors Enquiry Line has coordinated community education sessions, and disseminated factsheets and articles to seniors statewide on topical and critical issues. It has also developed referral pathways and an integrated response through the Older, Wiser, Safer Forum, a pilot seniors safety forum targeting both seniors and service providers who work with seniors.

As 18 per cent of the population of Greenslopes is aged 55 years and over, this area will benefit from the information and support service funded by the Queensland Government, specifically to meet the needs of older people throughout the State.

More information on the Seniors Enquiry Line is available at www.seniorsenquiryline.com.au or by calling 1300 135 500.