

Question on Notice

No. 811

Asked on Wednesday, 17 August 2022

MR S KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING, MINISTER FOR DIGITAL ECONOMY AND MINISTER FOR THE ARTS (HON L ENOCH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the high need for Men's Sheds in Queensland and the valuable role they play in mentoring those affected by loneliness, mental health and social issues—Will the Minister implement a specific funding program to assist in their start-up and running costs?

ANSWER:

The Australian Government, through the Department of Health and Aged Care, is responsible for supporting the Men's Sheds network across Australia. The Australian Government oversees the National Shed Development Programme to ensure that all Men's Sheds in Australia have access to resources, funding and support.

The Queensland Government recognises the important role that Men's Sheds play within local communities. This is why we delivered on our 2020 election commitment for a three-year funding package of \$450,000 to the Queensland Men's Shed Association, the industry body for Men's Sheds in Queensland.

This funding has been provided to support an executive officer position which will assist the Queensland Men's Shed Association carry out its important role to support Men's Sheds and continue its connection and work with the Australian Men's Shed Association, the national peak body for Men's Sheds.

Community organisations such as Men's Sheds can also apply for Queensland Government grants such as the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. From the most recent round of Gambling Community Benefit Funds grants in March 2022, 12 Men's Sheds in Queensland were successful in obtaining funding, ranging from \$2100 to \$93,600.

The Queensland Government has recently delivered on its election commitment to undertake an Inquiry into social isolation and loneliness. On 6 June 2022, the Queensland Government response to the *Parliamentary Inquiry into Social Isolation and Loneliness in Queensland* was tabled in Parliament, accepting all 14 recommendations in full or in principle.

The 2022–23 State Budget provided \$125.6 million over four years to strengthen social services in Queensland, with a strong focus on responding to social isolation and loneliness. This includes a record investment of \$115.8 million to support the important work of Neighbourhood and Community Centres, which complement and link with the Men's Shed network by playing a key role in connecting local community members, including people who are lonely, vulnerable, or disadvantaged.

Referrals to local Men's Sheds are available through Neighbourhood and Community Centres.

The Queensland Government will continue to work with community services organisations such as the Men's Shed Association of Queensland to deliver on the Government's objectives for the community and Government commitments.

The Queensland Government is committed to the wellbeing and cohesiveness of all Queensland communities, and I commend the Member for sharing in this commitment.