

SNAPSHOT OF ACHIEVEMENTS

88%

ELIGIBLE SENIORS WITH A SENIORS CARD

8,455

SENIORS ACCESSING THE SENIORS ENQUIRY LINE

3,430

CALLS INCLUDING 2,022 ABUSE NOTIFICATIONS
MADE TO ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION UNIT
HELPLINE

MORE
THAN

4,200

SENIORS ASSISTED BY SENIORS LEGAL AND
SUPPORT SERVICES

MORE
THAN

950,000

SENIORS CARD AND CARERS CARD HOLDERS

*(SENIORS CARDS, SENIORS CARD + GO, SENIORS BUSINESS DISCOUNT
CARD, CARER BUSINESS DISCOUNT CARD AND COMPANION CARD SCHEMES)*

DELIVERED DEPARTMENTAL OBJECTIVES

IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR SENIORS BY:

IMPROVING WELLBEING

CO-DESIGNING POLICIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

SUPPORTING SAFE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

The department delivers programs and services for seniors that reduce the cost of living, enhance wellbeing, support participation, and prevent and address elder abuse. We did this by promoting age-friendly communities that support seniors to be active and connected, and to contribute economically, socially and culturally to their communities.

Queensland: An Age-friendly Community strategy and action plan

The *Queensland: An Age-friendly Community* strategy and action plan were launched in October 2016. Significant change has occurred since then, driven by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the outcomes of the Aged Care Royal Commission. There is also a growing understanding of the impacts of social isolation on seniors. For these reasons we are reviewing the age-friendly strategy to update our understanding of the ways older Queenslanders interact with their communities and how we can best support them to contribute, remain connected and be cared for when needed.

Performance measure: Percentage of funded services that meet the needs of seniors—this measure has not been able to be calculated as there is no defined cohort and eligibility for some of the concessions changed during the year.

Key achievements

During the reporting period, the department:

- continued to deliver actions under the *Queensland: An Age-friendly Community Action Plan 2020* and related implementation schedule. Projects funded through the Age-friendly Community Grants Program were finalised
- commenced engagement activities to inform a refreshed, contemporary Queensland seniors strategy.

Seniors Expos

A vital part of ageing well is to be active and connected. We are committed to ensuring older Queenslanders are connected to people, services, information and activities in their communities. To better understand how we can support seniors to maintain these connections, we commenced a series of Seniors Expos in communities across Queensland during 2020–2021.

These expos have provided seniors with the opportunity to meet face-to-face with government representatives and local organisations about services and supports available in their community.

The expos brought together experts from Queensland Health, the Queensland Police Service, and our funded legal and financial service representatives to ensure seniors could get advice on:

- the COVID-19 vaccination rollout
- tips to protect themselves at home, in the community and financially
- local services supports and organisations they might want to join.

Experts on the Seniors Cards and related concessions and rebates were also on hand to ensure seniors are accessing all the services and discounts for which they are eligible.

Our expo events also provided an opportunity to talk to a diverse range of older people, about what we can do to make Queensland a more accessible and age-friendly place for everyone. This consultation is informing our work and enabling older people to have a voice in how Queensland communities can best meet the needs of everyone, including seniors living in rural and regional communities.

Key achievements

During the reporting period:

- two COVID-safe Seniors Expos were delivered at Bribie Island and Rockhampton for more than 200 seniors, as well as a morning tea in Longreach.

Our Seniors Expos will continue, subject to COVID-19 restrictions, throughout 2021–2022, in various locations across Queensland.

Elder abuse awareness, prevention and response services

The Queensland Government invested \$4.8 million in 2020–2021 for services to prevent and respond to elder abuse. These included:

- Seniors Legal and Support Services, and Seniors Financial Protection Services, which provide free legal and social support for older Queenslanders experiencing elder abuse, mistreatment, neglect or financial exploitation, in 11 locations across Queensland
- the statewide Elder Abuse Prevention Unit and Helpline, which promotes the rights of older people to live free from abuse and provides free advice and assistance to anyone who experiences, witnesses or suspects the abuse of an older person
- providing access to information to 8,455 service users through the Seniors Enquiry Line, including a consumer protection and scams advice service
- promoting inclusion and recognition for seniors in the community through awareness-raising activities, including Seniors Month.

On 15 June 2021, the department launched the annual Elder Abuse Awareness campaign, to coincide with International World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The campaign theme was ‘Together we can stop elder abuse’. The key focus of this campaign was to raise awareness of elder abuse and the need for individual and community action to prevent elder abuse from occurring.

The department also works with the Commonwealth Government and other states and territories in implementing a National Plan to Respond to the Abuse of Older Australians.

Key achievements

During the reporting period:

- more than 4,200 seniors were assisted by Seniors Legal and Support Services
- between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021, the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit received 3,430 phone calls to the Helpline, including 2,022 abuse notifications
- the most reported concerns were psychological abuse, which were raised in 71 per cent of notifications, and financial abuse, which were raised in 61 per cent of calls.

The data tells us that women are the victims of reported abuse in the majority of notifications, and sadly, the vast majority of abuse occurs within a family relationship, with nearly three-quarters of the reported abuse perpetrated by sons and daughters.

This highlights the value in providing immediate support and intervention for callers. It also builds the evidence base so that we can begin to better understand the causes and risk factors for both the victims, and the perpetrators of elder abuse.

Cost-of-living support through cards, concessions and rebates

In 2020–2021, the department continued to administer a range of Queensland Government concessions, such as electricity, rates, water and gas with an expenditure of \$401.7 million. Holders of the Queensland Seniors Card or Seniors Card +go, and other Queenslanders on low or fixed incomes, can access cost-of-living assistance including concessions for electricity, reticulated natural gas, public transport, long distance rail, vehicle and boat registration, spectacles, dental, medical aids, life support, fishing permits and entry fees to Queensland Government museums and art galleries.

Further support is available for eligible Queenslanders to manage the cost of living by using their Seniors Card, Seniors Business Discount Card and Carer Business Discount Card. These cards can be used to access discounts at almost 12,000 business outlets across Queensland.

Performance measure: Percentage of eligible people accessing concessions and support services—this measure has not been able to be calculated as there is no defined cohort and some concessions/discussions are assessed differently from businesses, resulting in lack of available data.

Key achievements

During the reporting period, the:

- Queensland Government card schemes provided access to benefits to over 950,000 card holders across Queensland
- department continued to assist eligible Queenslanders to receive cost-of-living support through the delivery of concession and rebate schemes, including administration of the Electricity Asset Ownership Dividend—a \$50 allowance credited to all Queensland residential accounts.

Supporting seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic

In 2019–2020, the Queensland Government made two COVID-19 energy rebates available, providing \$200 per Queensland household and \$500 to small and medium businesses. These rebates were one-off payments to help respond to cost-of-living pressures during the pandemic. However, the impacts of the pandemic continued beyond 2019–2020 and consequently, in 2020–2021 an additional \$40 million budget was allocated for these concessions.

Monitoring the outcomes of the Royal Commission into aged care

During the past year, we monitored the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and considered the impact of the recommendations of the final report.

Promote inclusion and access to programs and services by:

- supporting older people to lead healthy and productive lives, and ensure government policies and programs are age-friendly and inclusive
- supporting the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, and contributing to the reforms to palliative care through the development and implementation of a new palliative and end-of-life strategy
- embedding continuous improvement and internal review programs to inform quality service improvements
- working with strategic partners, including aged care facilities, to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Increase engagement through co-design by:

- partnering with seniors in the development of the next state seniors plan.

Influence social and economic outcomes by:

- maximising employment and business opportunities for seniors.

Foster safe and connected communities by:

- continuing to fund the Elder Abuse Prevention Service and Seniors Legal and Support Service.