

Queensland Government Response to Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee Report No. 2

Inquiry into the adequacy of existing financial protections for Queensland's seniors

INTRODUCTION

On 31 August 2015, the Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee Report (No. 2) on the *Inquiry into the adequacy of existing financial protections for Queensland's seniors* (the Report) was tabled in Parliament.

The Queensland Government Response to the Report's recommendations is provided below.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government develop an updated whole-of-government seniors' strategy.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

A whole-of-government strategy for older people will be launched in April 2016 that will facilitate an age-friendly Queensland. The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSDS) will engage with Queenslanders across the state and relevant stakeholders to inform the strategy.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Department review its existing staffing arrangements to ensure they adequately support the development and ongoing implementation of the seniors' policy agenda.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

Staffing arrangements within DCCSDS to best support development and ongoing implementation of seniors' policy agenda will be part of the ongoing operational considerations.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Department ensure that current information and service delivery mediums are sufficiently inclusive and multifaceted to ensure vulnerable seniors are not disadvantaged in terms of their awareness and/or access to vital programs and support.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

DCCSDS is progressing new initiatives and making improvements to information and services for older people. This will occur in liaison with organisations supporting vulnerable seniors.

For example, a one stop shop for seniors is being developed, comprising initiatives to improve the provision of information about relevant services through the web, phone and other channels, and increase the participation and connectedness of older Queenslanders.

These initiatives include:

- Tech Savvy Seniors, which is a partnership between the Queensland Government and Telstra to increase the digital literacy of seniors and get older people connected and using online services.
- A range of online improvements to the Seniors and Carers Business Discount Scheme and the Queensland Government's seniors website, including an improved search function so discounts and benefits are easier for cardholders to find.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government investigate the introduction of a whole-of-government program to support and monitor employment among over 50s in Queensland, including particular strategies and initiatives for those vulnerable population groups who are especially underrepresented or disadvantaged in terms of both employment opportunities and average wage levels.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

The Queensland Government is committed to improving employment outcomes for groups of people who traditionally face additional barriers in the labour market including older workers. Work is currently underway to investigate possible policy development in this area including holding a forum of key stakeholders to investigate ideas and opportunities.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government consider supporting a thorough review of current and potential concessions to ensure that supports and services are appropriately targeted to those individuals who are most in need of assistance, and that an appropriate mix of communication channels and messages are employed to ensure such supports and services are accessible to Queenslanders.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

Reviews of TransLink fares and electricity prices, including concessions, are currently underway. The findings and recommendations of these reviews will inform consideration of a broader review of concessions. On 3 February 2016, the Queensland Productivity Commission released a draft report following its Electricity Pricing Inquiry, recommending determination of a clear policy intent, as well as measures to improve targeting of the electricity rebate to those most in need, including extension of eligibility for the electricity rebate to Australian Government Health Care Card holders, and removal of automatic eligibility for Queensland Seniors Card holders as this card is not means tested. On 4

February 2016, the Queensland Treasurer issued a statement advising: 'Queensland pensioners and seniors (that) their existing electricity bill concessions were not at risk'.

An appropriate mix of communication channels and messages will be used to inform Queenslanders of concessions.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government develop a seniors housing framework which facilitates growth in affordable and accessible housing options and supports seniors to live as safely and independently as possible.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

The Government will explore options for growing affordable and accessible housing and supports for seniors through the following:

- development of an overarching Housing Strategy
- considering the outcomes of the Advisory Taskforce on the Residential Transition for Ageing Queenslanders review
- the implementation of the *State Planning Policy*
- the implementation of Economic Development Queensland's Ageing in Place strategy.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government finalise and implement recommendations stemming from existing reviews of the *Retirement Villages Act 1999* and the *Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003*.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

It is anticipated the reviews of the *Retirement Villages Act 1999* and the *Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act 2003* will be finalised by 2017. The Queensland Government will consider the outcomes of the review including need for amendments to the legislation with finalisation of the reviews.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Department's development of financial resilience and inclusion strategies include exploring options to address the credit and insurance needs of financially excluded seniors, and improving referral pathways linking older Queenslanders with safe, affordable alternative financial service products.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

A Queensland *Financial Resilience and Inclusion Action Plan, including a Financial Resilience* program, is being led by DCCSDS to commence from 1 July 2016. The program will introduce financial literacy capacity building and support to vulnerable Queenslanders, including seniors.

Consideration will be given during the design of the *Financial Resilience and Inclusion Action Plan* to exploring options to address the credit and insurance needs of vulnerable people, and improving referral pathways linking Queenslanders with safe, affordable alternative financial service products.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government ensure that its whole-of-government seniors' strategy includes an explicit focus on reducing social isolation and fostering the active engagement and participation of seniors in community and social life, in keeping with best practice guidelines.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

The whole-of-government seniors' strategy being developed (see response to Recommendation 1), will address concerns regarding social isolation and active engagement and participation of older Queenslanders. It is proposed the strategy take an age-friendly approach, first developed by the World Health Organisation, which contains eight domains, including social participation and respect and social inclusion.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government, in connection with regional councils, conduct inquiries into the policy implications of ageing communities, with a view to joining the WHO Global Age Friendly Cities and Communities Network.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

The WHO Global Age Friendly Cities and Communities network is restricted to cities and local communities and is not open to states or nations. However, DCCSDS will investigate joining the Age-Friendly Affiliated Programmes scheme, which is open to governments working with local communities to promote age-friendly environments (www.who.int/ageing/projects/age_friendly_cities_network/en/).

The seniors' strategy which will be developed (see response to Recommendation 1), will take an age-friendly approach. Consultation and engagement for the development of the strategy will be framed in the context of the eight 'age-friendly world' domains: transportation; outdoor spaces and building; housing; respect and social inclusion; social participation; communication and information; civic participation and employment opportunities; and community support and health services.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government explore options to improve the efficacy of current financial literacy efforts through the incorporation of more interactive, practice based program delivery methods and the informed development of more specific, targeted interventions for the State's most vulnerable seniors and the particular financial decisions with which they are faced.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation

The DCCSDS *Financial Literacy and Resilience* package aims to address financial capability at an early stage.

Consideration will be given during the design of the *Financial Literacy and Resilience* package to interactive program delivery methods and particular financial decisions at different life stages.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government develop a coordinated, whole-of-government strategy to encourage long-term financial planning and pro-active independent decision making, including improved uptake of powers of attorney, advanced care directives and will making.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation and will explore options to encourage long term financial planning and proactive independent decision making including improved uptake of powers of attorney, advanced care directives and will making.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government investigate the establishment of a dedicated, 24-hour financial advice helpline, drawing on the model provided by the UK FirstStop service (<http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/>).

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle.

In considering this recommendation it is noted, the regulation of financial services is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, and the Queensland Government will write to the Commonwealth and make representation on the recommendation as it relates to financial advice.

With respect to related state government initiatives, DCCSDS provides funding to UnitingCare Community to deliver the Seniors Enquiry Line, which provides referrals and information on a range of topics, including financial matters.

In addition, the Queensland Government 13QGOV call centre provides information and dedicated counselling and referral services on a range of services for people in need.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government work in partnership with Federal counterparts to explore options to reduce the complexity of aged care related contracts and educate consumers about fair and reasonable charges and contract conditions.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle, noting the Commonwealth Government has responsibility for the regulation of Aged Care.

The Queensland Government will write to the Commonwealth and make representation on the issue of aged care related contracts and consumer education.

In addition, DCCSDS will liaise with aged care peak bodies and services— Leading Aged Services Australia Queensland (LASA Q) and Council on the Ageing (COTA)—in relation to representations to the Commonwealth.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government reinstate funding for financial counselling in Queensland, and investigate ways to better facilitate vulnerable seniors' access to and uptake of free and independent financial advice.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle. The Queensland Government is developing a Queensland Financial Resilience and Inclusion Action plan that will inform the Financial Literacy and Resilience program.

Development of the Financial Literacy and Resilience program will examine a range of supports and services including the availability of financial counselling in Queensland, and investigate ways to better facilitate vulnerable seniors' access to and uptake of existing services.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government explore options to encourage the formalisation of family agreements.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation and will explore policy options to encourage the formalisation of family agreements.

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government engage with the Queensland Police Service and other key financial sector and consumer protection agencies in support of more comprehensive training for frontline staff in culturally appropriate and sensitive responses to victims of fraud.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

Training and Development – Police, Public Safety Business Agency will supplement training provided to recruits around responses to victims of fraud with a specially developed Online Learning Product. QPS will also review and include culturally sensitive and appropriate responses into existing case studies and scenarios involving fraud offences in the Detective Training Program, recruit training and other training packages.

As noted in the Committee's report, the QPS runs the dedicated Fraud Support and Recovery Group at QPS Headquarters in Brisbane.

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government explore options for improved support for Queensland seniors who are victims of fraud, including:

- partnering with key agencies to establish built-in mechanisms for referral to personal and financial
- counselling and victim support groups
- increased resourcing for victim support groups in high victimisation areas, including dedicated
- telephone counselling and referral options as employed in Canada
- consideration of options for statutory provision of non-financial assistance mechanisms in the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009*.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government will give further consideration to this recommendation in the context of a number of existing initiatives.

Victim Assist Queensland (VAQ) helps victims of any type of offence by referring them to specialist support services such as counselling.

However, the recently finalised review of the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009* (VOCA Act) did not consider it appropriate to make changes to the current scope of the VOCA Act.

The Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry (recommendation 5.9) recommended that the Government consider establishing a scheme to allow the victims of serious frauds to apply for compensation from property forfeited to the State under Chapter 3 of the *Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Act 2001*. The Government is considering this Commission of Inquiry recommendation.

DCCSDS supports a range of elder abuse services including the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit, which provides a state-wide telephone service.

The Government will convene a roundtable with key stakeholders to explore options and identify any improvements to existing initiatives.

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Police Service (QPS) explore further opportunities to leverage financial sector partnerships and technological systems to trace questionable or irregular transactions and identify early intervention opportunities.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

The QPS' Fraud and Cyber Crime Group (FCCG) will maintain and develop relationships with various national bodies and industry associations regarding fraud and cybercrime.

The FCCG represents the QPS on and contributes to a number of national bodies and industry associations that explore best practice for these types of crime.

The QPS Fraud Prevention Unit will continue to promote fraud prevention in the community.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government continue to support seniors' positive engagement with computing and internet technologies, through computer literacy and cyber-safety education programs and resources.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

Queensland is undertaking a range of initiatives to support digital engagement and skills, including among older people.

Tech Savvy Seniors is a partnership between the Queensland Government and Telstra to increase the digital literacy of seniors and get older people connected and using online services. Free training is being provided in selected local libraries across Queensland.

The Advance Queensland Community Digital Champions Program will include seniors with advanced digital skills as community role models and leaders.

DCCSDS, SLQ and DSITI are represented on the Digital Literacy Committee which will deliver a State-wide program to support digital literacy.

The QPS will continue to promote the utilization of ACORN (Australian Cybercrime Online Reporting Network www.acorn.gov.au/) as a single, centralised place for Australians to report cybercrime and obtain advice on how to avoid cybercrime.

Recommendation 21

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government develop a fraud prevention and awareness campaign based on best practice evidence, to reduce barriers to reporting and build resilience to social engineering techniques.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation. The Queensland Government delivers a range of initiatives which address these issues.

The QPS Fraud Prevention Unit will continue to promote fraud prevention in the community.

The QPS will continue to promote use of portals such as ACORN and Policelink for reporting crimes of this nature.

In addition, QPS is exploring the development of an interactive application for smart phones.

Recommendation 22

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government consider the introduction of a comprehensive telephone and advice service in relation to consumer protection and scams, modelled on the "Savvy Seniors" program developed in South Australia.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle noting that a range of existing Commonwealth and State provided or funded telephone and internet based

services provide advice on a range of topics including in relation to consumer protection issues.

A Seniors Enquiry Line 1300 135 500, is in place, which is funded by DCCSDS and delivered by UnitingCare Community (www.seniorsenquiryline.com.au/).

Smart Service Queensland provides scripted information services, on behalf of DCCSDS and consumer advice on behalf of the Office of Fair Trading. Consideration will be given to building a purposely designed script around “Savvy Seniors”.

The information contained in the “Savvy Seniors” guide is made available by the Office of Fair Trading through the Queensland Government’s one-stop-shop (www.qld.gov.au) which can be accessed from www.qld.gov.au/seniors/.

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government continue to work with the Federal Government and enforcement agencies to promote responsible lending and other ethical business practices to better safeguard the interests and assets of vulnerable seniors.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation, noting that general consumer protection is regulated under national laws.

Responsible lending is a matter for the Commonwealth Government’s Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). The Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General’s Office of Fair Trading (OFT) refers all credit/responsible lending related matters to ASIC which is also responsible for the promotion of its laws. OFT encourages ethical business practices in a range of areas of state responsibility.

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government audit and increase Seniors Legal and Support Services provided throughout the State and prioritise the provision of services to regional hubs and under-served areas.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle and will explore options for undertaking an audit of Seniors Legal and Support Services and potential prioritisation of these services to regional hubs and under-served areas.

The Queensland Government acknowledges the valuable work done by Seniors Legal and Support Services in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Townsville, and Cairns, and by the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit, which provides a state-wide telephone service.

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that the *Public Guardian Act 2014* be amended to allow the Office of the Public Guardian to continue to investigate a matter, notwithstanding the death of the individual whose affairs are being investigated.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the intent of the recommendation, and will examine ways to address the aims of the recommendation.

Recommendation 26

The Committee recommends that the community visitors program be expanded into all areas of care in Queensland.

Government response

Not supported

The Queensland Government does not support the recommendation.

The Queensland Government Community Visitor Program managed by the Officer of the Public Guardian, monitors “visitable sites” where vulnerable adults live. Visitable sites are: disability accommodation provided or funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services; authorised mental health services and private hostels (level 3 accreditation) There are no plans to expand this program as “visitable sites” cover accommodation services for vulnerable people, not including aged care services.

The regulation of aged care is a Commonwealth responsibility. The Queensland Government will refer this matter to the Commonwealth for its consideration about establishing a community visitor program for aged care services.

Recommendation 27

The Committee recommends the development of agreed standards of care for clinical staff working in care in Queensland with regard to the recognition and identification of risk factors relating to abuse and exploitation.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle and will explore the development of standards for relevant health services, where such standards do not already exist. If such standards need to be developed these would be made available to organisations that do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Queensland Government such as non-government or private sector care providers.

In particular, consideration will be given to promoting the information that the Queensland Government provides for health professionals about identifying elder abuse and how to support patients who may be experiencing it, including referral points for older people with capacity and without capacity. This is available at www.qld.gov.au/seniors/safety-protection/info-health-professionals/index.html.

For older Queenslanders who reside in formal aged care places, the Commonwealth Government is responsible for the policy, planning, regulation and subsidisation of age care under the *Aged Care Act 1997* (Cwlth) and residential aged care providers and home care providers are expected to meet a number of standards that are detailed in the Quality of Care Principles 2014.

(www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2014L00830/Html/Text#_Toc390951218).

The Australian Aged Care Quality Agency is responsible for overseeing quality issues within the residential aged care and home care sector. Queensland Hospital and Health Services

which deliver residential aged care services and home care services are responsible for ensuring that these services meet the Commonwealth Standards.

Recommendation 28a (numbered as 28 in the report)

The Committee recommends that clinical staff working in aged care in Queensland be required to be mandatory reporters where abuse or exploitation of a person with impaired capacity is suspected, regardless of the nature of the abuse or exploitation.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle.

The regulation of aged care services is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, and the Queensland Government will refer this recommendation to the Commonwealth as it relates to aged care.

Recommendation 28b (numbered as 28 in the report)

The Committee recommends that the definitions of “relevant relationship” in the *Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Act 2012* be amended to include paid carers, companions, friends and boarders.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle, subject to the issue being considered in the current review of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (the DFVPA).

The Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland (the Taskforce) made three recommendations to address elder abuse in its *Not Now, Not Ever* report (recommendations 11 -13), which were accepted by Government.

Recommendation 11 was for a specific review to be undertaken into the prevalence and characteristics of elder abuse in Queensland to inform the development of integrated responses and a communication strategy for elderly victims of domestic and family violence. This specific review is being commissioned.

The Taskforce also recommended an overarching review of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 2012* (recommendation 140). The review of the DFVPA is being undertaken separately to the review under recommendation 11 and includes considering changes to the definitions of ‘relevant relationship’.

Recommendation 29

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government develop programs to enhance the delivery, availability and accessibility of Supported Elder Mediation.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General’s Dispute Resolution Branch (DRB) will explore options for the development and implementation of Supported Elder Mediation.

Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government commission a study into the prevalence of elder abuse in Queensland.

Government response

Supported

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation.

As part of the response to the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland report *Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland*, the Queensland Government will commission a review into the prevalence and characteristics of elder abuse in Queensland to inform the development of integrated service response models.

Recommendation 31

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government work closely with service providers to develop a broader range of strategies to assist individuals manage their affairs in the least restrictive, most supported way possible.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle and will explore options for working with service providers to develop strategies to assist individuals to manage their affairs in the least restrictive and most supported way possible.

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government explore options to ensure substitute decision-making paperwork better reflects principles of supportive decision-making and more clearly communicates to the parties involved the implications of the arrangements.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the intent of the recommendation, and will examine ways to address the aims of the recommendation.

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government consider and adopt strategies to regulate and record the appointment of attorneys in Queensland.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the intent of the recommendation, noting there are competing arguments for and against compulsory registration. The Government will examine ways to address the aims of the recommendation.

Recommendation 34

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government consider amendments to the *Powers of Attorney Act 1998* to expressly provide that attorneys demonstrate explicit and actual knowledge of an attorney's duties and responsibilities before they are appointed as an attorney.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the intent of the recommendation, and will examine ways to address the aims of the recommendation.

Recommendation 35

The Committee recommends that the *Powers of Attorney Act 1998* be amended to provide a specific duty for former attorneys to produce and hand over records to subsequent attorneys.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the intent of the recommendation, and will examine ways to address the aims of the recommendation.

Recommendation 36

The Committee recommends that the *Public Trustee Act 1978* is amended to give the Public Trustee powers to enable them to investigate and prosecute both current and former attorneys where there is evidence of financial abuse, regardless of whether the person has capacity.

Government response

Not supported

The Queensland Government does not support the recommendation.

These amendments to the *Public Trustee Act 1978* are not required given the Public Guardian has the power to investigate current and former attorneys where there is evidence of financial abuse and the principal lacks capacity. In addition, regardless of whether an adult lacks capacity, the police may investigate and prosecute allegations of fraud or other criminal offences under existing laws, and remedies at common law or in equity for financial abuse arising from improper or inappropriate dealing with any person's assets and financial resources may be available, depending on the conduct in question.

Recommendation 37

The Committee recommends the compulsory registration of powers of attorney.

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government work with the Federal Government to implement a Federal Register to complement the proposed State Register.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the intent of the recommendation, noting there are competing arguments for and against compulsory registration. The Government will examine ways to address the aims of the recommendation.

Recommendation 38

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government provide an update on its position regarding recommendations 17.18 and 17.19 of Queensland Law Reform Commission report no. 67, *A review of Queensland's Guardianship Laws* (2010).

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle. The Government supports the intent of the QLRC recommendations, and will examine ways to address the aims of the QLRC recommendations.

Recommendation 39

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government examine options to improve available financial remedies and compensation available for seniors who are victims of financial elder abuse.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the intent of the recommendation, and will examine ways to address the aims of the recommendation particularly in respect of adults with impaired capacity who are within the jurisdiction of the Public Guardian and Public Trustee.

Recommendation 40

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government develop an education and awareness program that promotes awareness of elder abuse and incorporates a range of accessible and inclusive community education programs that outline the role and responsibilities of powers of attorney.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle. This recommendation will be actioned in part through implementation of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland (Taskforce) in the following ways:

- The Queensland Government's Communication Strategy on domestic and family violence for Queensland (Recommendation 18) will target elder abuse and address information and support needs for those experiencing elder abuse (Recommendation 12).
- The review into the prevalence and characteristics of elder abuse in Queensland will inform the development of the communications strategy (Recommendation 11).

DCCSDS runs an annual Elder Abuse Awareness Prevention Campaign that promotes recognising signs of elder abuse, the Elder Abuse Helpline and ideas for community action in a local area. Campaign resources are available to the public through the Queensland Government's website and campaign Facebook page.

Recommendation 41

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government implement a multi-disciplinary approach to training, support and reporting elder abuse.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle.

This recommendation will be considered as part of the review of elder abuse.

This recommendation will also be actioned in part through implementation of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland.

The Queensland Government currently funds the:

- Seniors Legal and Support Services which assist older people who are at risk of and/or experiencing elder abuse.
- The Elder Abuse Prevention Unit (EAPU) which provides an information, training and referral service for preventing, responding to, and raising awareness of elder abuse.

DCCSDS will continue to work with the Public Trustee of Queensland and other services to develop and deliver community and professional education programs.

The Government will further consider how it can improve its response to elder abuse including through a multi-disciplinary approach.

Recommendation 42

The Committee recommends that the Queensland Government support efforts to develop more formal protocols and service obligations for financial services providers with regard to elder abuse, including exploring opportunities for trials of coordinated partnership projects and mandatory reporting.

Government response

Supported in principle

The Queensland Government supports the recommendation in principle.

The regulation of financial services is the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government, and the Queensland Government will refer this recommendation to the Commonwealth.