



SNIPPETS

June 2015 Edition 161

Seniors Enquiry Line
*Linking Seniors with
Community Information*

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Quote for the Month

'Right now is the youngest I'll ever be, so I suppose I'd better act immature while I still can.'

— Jarod Kintz

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Seniors Enquiry Line is an information and referral service for Queensland seniors, proudly sponsored by the Queensland Government Department of Communities and operated by UnitingCare Community.

Heater Safety Checks

As temperatures drop, Queenslanders are urged to check their heating appliances. Each winter, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) respond to many fires started after electrical appliances were misused or not properly maintained.

QFES recommends that checks are performed by a qualified electrician.

Older heaters caused the most concern as they do not have additional safety features which newer ones have. Regardless of the appliance's age, it is crucial that heaters and electric blankets are checked every year for fraying or exposed cords or rust.

Also, take care that heating appliances are not placed too close to flammable materials like blankets, mattresses, pillows or clothing.

QFES offers a free service to assist residents with fire safety around their home, although they cannot check appliances. To book a Safehome visit, call 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or visit

<https://fire.qld.gov.au/communitysafety/freeprograms/safehome.asp>



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)

15 June, 2015

WEAAD, designated by the UN, is an opportunity for all to speak out against elder abuse. WEAAD is represented by the colour **purple**, denoting wisdom, dignity, independence and creativity.



Events are being held around Queensland. You may like to do something purple around the 15th June and tell people why.

Go to www.weaadqld.com for details of posters, fact sheets and some purple ideas, or phone Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500.

For free and confidential advice on elder abuse, phone the Elder Abuse Helpline on 1300 651 192.

Budget 2015

Some of the changes which the government has included in this year's budget are:

- Last year's budget measure, where pensions were going to be linked only to the CPI, will not go ahead.
- From 1 January 2017, asset thresholds for pensions will change. Firstly, the value of assets you can have in order to qualify for a full pension will increase, meaning that more people will be eligible for a full pension instead of a part pension. On the other hand, many current part-pensioners will no longer qualify for the pension at all, as the value of assets you can hold to qualify for a part pension will be reduced. Those who no longer receive a pension due to these changes, will remain eligible for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card or Health Care Card.
- For many current part-pensioners, from 1 January 2017 there will be a reduction in pension due to the change to the taper rate: for every \$1,000 in assets above the minimum threshold for a full pension, fortnightly payments will be reduced by \$3 instead of \$1.50
- From 1 January 2017, after six weeks absence from Australia (rather than 26 weeks as at present), pensioners who have lived in Australia for less than 35 years will be paid at a reduced rate. There will be some exemptions.
- From 1 January 2016, the level of income from defined benefit superannuation that can be excluded from the pension income test will be capped at 10 per cent. This measure mainly affects former public sector employees, although not all will be affected
- From 1 February 2017, Home Care Packages will be allocated directly to consumers by the My Aged Care Gateway rather than to service providers. Aged care recipients will be able to receive services from a provider of their choice, and have the ability to change providers.
- From 1 January 2016, aged care residents who rent out their former home and pay aged care accommodation costs by periodic payments (rather than by a lump sum), will have their rental income exemption removed, thus improving the fairness of means testing arrangements.
- Changes will occur to the Restart program (a program for job seekers who are 50 years of age or older, and who have been unemployed and on income support for six months or more), giving more encouragement to employers to employ mature workers.

All these changes need to be approved by parliament of course, but it is possible that all or most will be passed .

If you have further questions, please phone Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500, and we will research the information, or refer you on.



LGBTI and Carers - Survey

A survey, *Understanding the needs and experiences of older LGBTI carers and the carers of older LGBTI people in Australia*, is being conducted by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society at La Trobe University and Carers Australia. It is an online survey with confidential interviews.

Information from the survey will be used to develop educational resources for aged care services and carer support services for older lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people.

To be eligible participants must be: an Australian resident who is: an older LGBTI carer or the carer of an older LGBTI person, in a carer role currently or have been in a carer role in the last two years.

To complete the survey, go to

https://latrobe.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bdYV936HZfLDAXL

For more information, phone (03) 9479 8702.

Financial advice and you

The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) has produced a new booklet '*Financial advice and you*' which helps with: the kind of financial advice you need, the best place to get advice, and how to get the most from your conversations with financial advisers.



Even if you're on a modest income you can benefit from financial advice. You may even be able to access some kinds of advice for free. The booklet explains all these things and more.

The booklet is available to download at ASIC's MoneySmart website www.moneysmart.gov.au or call Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500 for a copy.

What's On

Retirement Accommodation sessions – SE Qld

The Park and Village Information Link and the Seniors Legal And Support Service present free legal information sessions to the community, covering retirement living options, living in a retirement village or a manufactured home park, and tips to avoid financial exploitation.

For a list of sessions in SE Qld, go to https://caxton.org.au/park_village_information.html or phone Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500.

There are other events on our '[Events](#)' pages - go to www.seniorenquiryline.com.au