

ELDER RIGHTS WA

216. Ms M.M. QUIRK to the Minister for Seniors and Ageing:

Looking at the Leader of the House, I feel a little underdressed today!

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to protecting vulnerable seniors and tackling the scourge of elder abuse in Western Australia. Can the minister update the house on this government's investment in establishing the Elder Rights WA service and outline how this service will ensure that victims have access to the legal advice and representation that they need?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

I thank the member for Landsdale for the question and also for her advocacy for seniors in our community over many, many years.

As the house well knows, the McGowan government is a champion for seniors in Western Australia, but elder abuse continues to be a scourge on society. It too often remains hidden or goes unreported because it often involves a trusted relationship. That needs to change. Victims of elder abuse need to know that they can come forward and have access to legal advice and representation should they need it.

I am pleased to inform the house that last week the Attorney General and I launched the Elder Rights WA service for seniors experiencing elder abuse. The launch of this critical \$4 million service will deliver yet another McGowan government election commitment to older Western Australians. The statewide service network of offices run by Legal Aid Western Australia will provide legal advice and support to Western Australian seniors experiencing all forms of elder abuse and also safeguard and advocate for the rights of older people. As part of Elder Rights WA, Legal Aid offices across Western Australia, including in Bunbury, Albany, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, South Hedland, Broome and Kununurra, will provide legal advice and support for people experiencing elder abuse or seeking guidance on other legal matters. A network of 14 virtual offices will also provide virtual face-to-face appointments with Legal Aid WA civil lawyers working from other locations at citizens' advice bureaus across metropolitan Perth as well as in the Peel region, Esperance, Karratha, Leonora, Fitzroy Crossing and Jurien Bay. Legal Aid will partner with Advocare to deliver information and community education programs in Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Geraldton and Broome.

The service model for Elder Rights has been developed by Legal Aid WA in partnership with the Department of Communities and is a comprehensive first-of-its-kind service for our vast state. Elder Rights WA will build on Legal Aid's seniors rights and advocacy service, which provides legal advice and representation regarding elder abuse and other legal matters. Elder Rights WA will provide legal assistance to older people experiencing all forms of elder abuse and will safeguard and advocate for the rights of older people.

I am proud to deliver this initiative on behalf of the government. I am also proud to be part of a government that keeps its commitments. Elder Rights WA will make a significant difference to the lives of thousands of Western Australians when they are at their most vulnerable. It is yet another example of how this government's sound financial management gives us the capacity to prioritise extra services that build our communities and protect the vulnerable. I commend the service to house.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition with the last question.