

Ministerial statement

Thousands more Queensland seniors to be given helping hand to bridge digital divide

The state's seniors will be going digital with more than 10,000 people expected to get involved in the popular Tech Savvy Seniors Queensland program.

Minister for Innovation, Science and Digital Economy Leeanne Enoch said today (Wednesday) training sessions will be delivered at 30 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres across the state as part of the program.

Ms Enoch said the program will teach Queensland seniors to use a variety of technologies to help them navigate the evolving digital world.

"This program will provide Queensland's growing seniors population with the skills needed to securely access essential services online," Ms Enoch said.

"The digital world is changing at a rapid pace and navigating it comfortably is something often take for granted.

"Tech Savvy Seniors delivers well-paced sessions to help seniors develop a range of useful skills including how to use a smartphone and an iPad, the basics of social media, and how to shop online and access core government services.

"The program strives to get Queensland's older population online with confidence, help reduce social isolation often experienced from not being digitally connected, and improve resilience to online fraud and financial abuse.

"In fact, this year we've rolled out two new digital services for Queenslanders over 60. Our Seniors Concessions service enables Queensland seniors to apply for and access multiple concessions through a single process, saving them time, money, and effort.

"We are looking for feedback on our new My Account dashboard. My Account personalises government services around your needs, age and location and presents it together in one easy and convenient dashboard.

"My Account works for all Queenslanders, but we have started by focusing on services for seniors. This meets the government's commitment to improving services for over 60s in the *Queensland: An Age Friendly Community Action Plan*."

Tech Savvy Seniors Queensland – in its second year - is a partnership between the State Library of Queensland, Telstra, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, and Queensland Public Libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres. Training is delivered by experienced facilitators, with all the necessary technology provided for the sessions.

Minister for Seniors Coralee O'Rourke said the Tech Savvy Seniors program demonstrates the Palaszczuk Government's commitment to improving the lives of older Queenslanders by bridging the digital divide.

"While digital literacy is steadily increasing across the state, Queensland's over 65 population is one of the groups who are the least digitally included and are at risk of being left behind," she said.

"As more and more government and essential services move online, strengthening the digital literacy of seniors will better facilitate their access to information and provide them with the confidence and skills they need to embrace digital services."

State Librarian and CEO Vicki McDonald said the community response to the program previously was overwhelming and this year's program is proving to be just as popular.

"The feedback we've received about Tech Savvy Seniors has been incredibly positive which demonstrates the demand among seniors to stay connected and up-to-date," she said.

"From online grocery orders to connecting with children or grandchildren, the program aims to deliver tangible, often life-changing outcomes for older Queenslanders. It is wonderful to see how these services are making such a positive impact on the participants' lives."

Telstra's General Manager for Digital Inclusion, Nancie-Lee Robinson, said Tech Savvy Seniors is part of Telstra's commitment to helping all Australians enjoy the benefits of being connected and engaged with digital technology.

"Telstra's 2017 Australian Digital Inclusion Index research found Queensland seniors, or those aged over 65, are our most digitally excluded group. Tech Savvy Seniors is a way to help address that," Ms Robinson said.

"Digital technology can help break down social barriers, create efficiencies, and open up new learning and engagement opportunities for Queenslanders in their golden years."

Tech Savvy Seniors Queensland 2017-2018 participating library services and Indigenous Knowledge Centres: Brisbane City Council, Bundaberg Regional Council, Burdekin Shire Council, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, Central Highlands Regional Council, Charters Towers Regional Council, Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, Cook Shire Council, Douglas Shire Council, Fraser Coast Regional Council, Gold Coast City Council, Goondiwindi Regional Council, Gympie Regional Council, Ipswich City Council, Livingstone Shire Council, Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Logan City Council, Maranoa Regional Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Mount Isa City Council, Noosa Shire Council, North Burnett Regional Council, Rockhampton Regional Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Southern Downs Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Regional Council, Toowoomba Regional Council, Western Downs Regional Council and Whitsunday Regional Council.

For further information about the Tech Savvy Seniors Queensland Initiative, visit www.slq.qld.gov.au/whats-on/programs.

ENDS

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