

SENIORS — HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

397. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Seniors and Volunteering:

I am proud of the Liberal–National government’s commitment in supporting some of the most valued members of our community, our seniors. With this mind, can the minister please outline to the house how this government is supporting seniors in our community to pay their household expenses?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

I thank the member for the question. Last month I had the opportunity to give out a cost-of-living rebate. Our government brought this in in 2008. I am proud to say that we have accessed 288 000 Seniors Card holders and we have given out over \$152 million to seniors since 2008. The Liberal government has a very strong record. We acknowledge that people on low or fixed incomes will struggle with the cost of living. That is why we give out \$159.90 to singles and \$239.90 to couples. Many seniors on low incomes are struggling. We should keep in mind that in Australia, this will be the first year more people will be turning 60 years old than babies will be born. The Liberal–National government recognises the efforts seniors have put into our community, so they need the respect of the government and financial help through the cost-of-living rebate. The actual Seniors Card payments are paid directly into their bank accounts.

The state government also offers through their Seniors Card discounts on shire rates and water rates and assistance through the electricity provider. We recently made changes so that retirees in group housing can also access the discount. We have also developed an age-friendly WA strategy for seniors. This is all part of our government supporting seniors in our community to help them live with the costs of living and to support them in their everyday lives.