

AMBULANCE SERVICES

890. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

Why is eligibility for free ambulance services limited to people on the aged pension, and not all health care card holders, as is the case in other states in Australia?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

The government's ambulance policy for seniors, which commenced in July 2005, reflects an ongoing annual commitment of \$40 million made by the Minister for Health to Western Australian aged pensioners and seniors. This initiative offsets the cost of ambulance services for both aged pensioners and seniors by 50 per cent. In addition, aged pensioners receive free services by virtue of a further discount of 50 per cent from St John Ambulance's Western Australian ambulance service. Many different arrangements for ambulance fees and charges apply between states.