

PUBLIC TRANSPORT — SENIORS

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

Can the minister please outline to the house how the Liberal–National government’s free off-peak travel initiative for WA Seniors Card holders has supported and encouraged older Western Australians to lead full and active lives?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON replied:

I thank the member for his question. Yes; he is right. The WA Seniors Card is the most generous seniors card in Australia and helps support seniors in their day-to-day living. This is the only state in Australia that gives cash payments as a cost-of-living rebate. Also, of course, the grandparent payment is a cash payment, and, again, Western Australia is the only state in Australia that does that. Of course, there are over 15 concessions that can help seniors live well in our community, with discounts on photo identification cards, drivers’ licences and even fishing licences, as well as discounts to museums and parks.

When we came to government in 2008, the then Minister for Transport and I launched free public transport services during off-peak periods for seniors. That has been an outstanding success, with over 53 million trips being taken by seniors in Western Australia. Of those trips, 5.4 million were taken on the Mandurah line. Over nine million free trips were taken in 2015, with a saving of somewhere between 60c and \$4.20 per senior travel trip and a total of nearly \$32 million in savings for seniors in Western Australia.

Last November, we launched our off-peak free travel service between 6.00 pm and 7.00 am. Over 176 000 seniors have taken up that service for free travel in the evenings in the first six months. It is fantastic to see seniors getting out in our community. We want to make sure that we support them with free public transport and that they are given access to the WA Seniors Card so they can get discounts and all those concessions. Western Australia is the only state in Australia that people should want to live in, with over 15 concessions. I look forward to seniors in Forrestfield with WA Seniors Cards catching the train to Perth when that line is opened. More importantly, our government is very supportive of seniors in Western Australia.