

COUNTRY AGE PENSION FUEL CARD

**940. Ms M.J. DAVIES to the Premier:**

I refer to the Country Age Pension Fuel Card introduced by the former Liberal–National government to support eligible regional pensioners with the cost of travel.

- (1) Given the significant rise in fuel and other cost-of-living pressures experienced by those on fixed incomes, will the government increase the value of the card?
- (2) Will the government reinstate indexation to preserve the real value of these cards by those who require it to attend essential medical appointments, stay connected with family and friends and be mobile in their own communities where there is no or little public transport?

**Mr R.H. COOK replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. We regard assisting Western Australians with the cost of living as one of our key priorities. When I became Premier, I said we will keep the economy strong, keep Western Australian jobs growing and look after those doing it tough. That is why we have taken important measures in relation to the cost of living, particularly with our \$400 household electricity credit and our \$300 KidSport grants and other measures that go to assisting Western Australians with the cost of living.

One of the policies that we are particularly proud of is the regional airfare caps. That allows people in regional Western Australia to stay connected. We know that because many Western Australians live at such great distances apart and away from Perth, they often have great expenses for airfares within the state. Our regional airfare cap scheme is an incredibly important gesture to assist regional Western Australians deal with the cost of living.

Of course, we have continued the fuel card subsidy arrangements. It is an important part of the work that the Minister for Regional Development does to continue to keep Western Australians connected. We have also increased assistance under the patient assisted travel scheme, which was recommended by a parliamentary committee prior to the Liberal and National Parties' departure from the government benches in 2017 but which the previous government completely ignored. I share the member's passion for assisting regional Western Australians deal with the cost of living and quality of life, and we will continue to put in place measures to assist everyone, particularly those doing it tough at the moment.