

SENIORS — FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

**376. Mr T.J. HEALY to the Minister for Seniors and Ageing:**

Before I ask my question, on behalf of myself and the member for Jandakot, I acknowledge the students of Canning Vale College in the public gallery.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to continuing Labor's strong record on supporting our seniors, including the introduction of the WA Seniors Card by the Dowding Labor government 33 years ago. Can the minister update the house on how the McGowan Labor government is helping to ease the financial strain on Seniors Card holders, particularly those who are facing financial challenges as a result of COVID-19?

**Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:**

I certainly can. I would like to thank the member for Southern River for his question and also acknowledge the tireless work that he does in connecting with his community and in particular bringing forward the issues that seniors face in his community. I thank him.

The McGowan government is a champion for seniors in Western Australia. The WA Seniors Card program was brought into being by a great Labor minister, Hon Kay Hallahan, in 1988. It was the first program of its kind in Australia and it was subsequently taken up right throughout Australia. That just goes to show what a great and innovative initiative it is. The WA program provides seniors across the state with access to, on average, \$650 annually in total value for state government concessions. That figure is higher if they hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card or a Pensioner Concession Card. In July 2021, more than 312 000 Western Australian Seniors Card members received the cost-of-living rebate—in total, approximately \$25.5 million. Singles receive \$93.12 and couples receive \$139.64.

The WA Seniors Card program also provides members with access to over 900 business discounts, and I know that those are in great demand. Those discounts offer great savings every day, assisting seniors with the cost of living. What is more, Madam Speaker, the McGowan government will soon be reintroducing the safety and security rebate, and that will allow WA Seniors Card members to claim up to \$400 per household to go towards installing or buying home safety or security devices. We are able to deliver these concessions because of the strong and responsible budget management of the McGowan Labor government. I know they are going to be very well received by our seniors community.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition with the last question.