

TRANSPORT — REGIONAL AIRFARE ZONE CAP

**504. Ms D.G. D'ANNA to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's efforts to ease cost-of-living pressures for families across Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the government's regional airfare zone cap, including the results for its first year of operation?
- (2) Can the minister outline how the scheme is supporting people living in regional WA?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

I thank the member for Kimberley for that question.

- (1)–(2) I want to highlight some of the sporting efforts over the weekend: of course, the mighty Matildas; the Dockers, with a big victory; and, most importantly, my daughter Lucia, who at the Dockers game kicked a goal wearing number 10. Mighty Lucia kicked a goal at half-time in her little WA AFL jumper.

It was an exciting time, but what is even more exciting is the number of people who have taken advantage of the regional airfare zone cap scheme. A total of 151 000 Western Australians have taken advantage of the regional airfare cap. We know that living in regional WA has its challenges. When we won government, it was one of the biggest issues raised with us across the state, particularly in Karratha and Port Hedland, member for Pilbara. Member for Kalgoorlie, it was the number one issue that was raised with us every time we went to Kalgoorlie. Of course, member for Kimberley, whether it be Broome or Kununurra, in particular, the cost of flying to Perth was astronomical.

In the first 12 months of the scheme, when we capped airfares for regional residents, 151 000 airfares were booked by regional residents. That is an enormous success. It beat all our targets and all our forecasts. The biggest uptake has been in the Pilbara, with over 38 000 fares from Karratha, over 20 000 from Port Hedland and over 10 000 from Paraburdoo. Kalgoorlie had the second biggest take-up, with 20 000; and, of course, member for Broome, 16 700 from Broome. The savings in some instances are up to \$500 a ticket. These are significant and real savings for people in regional WA. I have some testimonials from people around the state. According to my notes, a Kalgoorlie resident said —

Honestly, with my family split between Broome and Kalgoorlie, and with mum passing in January and us needing to get around, it was great knowing flights were there and not stress about maybe the cost.

A Broome resident said —

I recently had a baby and now she is 10 months old and she has done 10 flights already. The capped scheme has made a massive difference to our ability to fly down to visit grandparents and her grandma so they can get to know her as she grows.

Other testimonials from Broome, Kalgoorlie and Albany residents all support the regional airfare zone cap, which saves them hundreds of dollars every time they fly. Indeed, 151 000 airfares have been sold under this scheme. This is the most successful initiative that we have rolled out in transport across the state. Of course, we have all the regional infrastructure, but this is completely changing people's lives. Of course, it is the Labor Party supporting regional residents. The Leader of the Opposition was out there at the Rockingham by-election wearing a Liberal Party hat!

**Mr R.S. Love:** Put Labor last!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** That worked for you, didn't it! That really worked; it worked so well—welcome again, member for Rockingham, Magenta Marshall!

**Mr R.S. Love** interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** As I recall, the cap you were wearing—they came last. Where is your white cap? Remember, the National Party turned its back on regional WA, targeting densely populated areas and buying Liberal Party hats. Liberal Party bumper stickers may be next as they try to remove those awful Metronet stickers from their cars.

**Mr D.R. Michael** interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sorry?

**The SPEAKER:** Perhaps no more help from interjections, thank you. Minister, if I could ask you to draw your answer to a close, please.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is pretty short, really.

Remember, the former Liberal–National government had eight and half years in government to deliver a scheme like this. It is an Australian first—a capped regional airfare scheme that is supporting thousands of Western Australians living in regional WA and making it easier to live in regional WA, and supporting the cost of living in regional WA.