

AIRFARES — REGIONS

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

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's effort to reduce the cost of living for families across Western Australia.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how this government's regional airfare zone cap scheme is supporting Western Australians living in regional WA?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this scheme is connecting regional communities with essential services?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:

Thank you very much, member.

- (1)–(2) Across the government and across my portfolio we are very much concentrating on making sure that we can relieve cost-of-living pressures. That is why there has been a number of initiatives across the state. Of course, across the metropolitan area we have the two-zone fare cap. On the first Sunday of every month public transport will be free. A major initiative for regional Western Australia has been the cap on regional airfares. This is the first time across the nation that this type of policy has been introduced. We have seen incredible success. Over 66 000 flights were under that capped scheme in the first six months of its operation. From the member's electorate alone, we have had 8 000 flights from Broome and over 1 000 from Kununurra, whereby people have taken advantage of guaranteed capped fares that are supporting regional Western Australians. In this budget, we will again be increasing the budget for the capped scheme by another \$20 million to ensure that we can continue to roll out this scheme and ensure that regional Western Australians can take advantage of this truly nation-first initiative.

We are also implementing other initiatives. We will provide \$800 000 over the next four years for a third weekly return service on the Kununurra–Halls Creek–Balgo route. We will provide another \$1.3 million to continue the subsidised flights between Broome and Derby, and \$2.3 million to seal the Warmun community airstrip in the East Kimberley, allowing it to receive flights, in particular for medical emergencies. On top of that, we will be investing \$750 000 to carry out a study of 34 airstrips in remote Aboriginal communities, understanding that in extreme weather events, it is the ability to land to deliver essential services and to take off in these remote communities that is essential, in particular at times of natural disaster.

It is a significant package of nation-first initiatives that supports the cost of living, but in particular all our workers and residents in regional WA to make sure that they can fly in and out of the city at a guaranteed affordable rate.

The SPEAKER: The member for Cottesloe with the last question.