

PUBLIC TRANSPORT — COST-OF-LIVING RELIEF

**111. Mrs L.A. MUNDAY to the Minister for Transport:**

I refer to the Cook Labor government's efforts to support Western Australians facing cost-of-living pressures.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on the outcomes of this government's summer of free public transport?
- (2) Can the minister also advise the house whether she is aware of anyone who is opposed to important cost-of-living initiatives, such as cheaper public transport?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Order please, members!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Dawesville for that question. Of course, the residents of the member for Dawesville's electorate are already benefiting significantly from the two-zone fare cap. Remember, it is one of those areas that benefited most from that initiative, with —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** That's right. We love it!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The member for Mandurah is very excited by it, too! Residents there are saving thousands of dollars each year in commute costs because of the two-zone fare cap. I think one-way travel went down from \$11 to less than \$5. As we can see, those residents are already benefiting from a range of initiatives. Of course, we also had the summer of free public transport, and some numbers have come through that demonstrate just how successful that was. There were 10.51 million total boardings on Transperth trains, buses and ferries in January. Those are the best numbers for over a decade, members. It was a record January for our buses, with 5.9 million boardings. As the Premier just outlined, there was an overall record for ferries—108 000 boardings in January, eclipsing the previous record set. Our train network was also very, very strong, hitting numbers of 4.5 million; that is a record since pre-COVID. Of course, the Armadale line shutdown affected those numbers, but we can see how strong the numbers still are. It was also the best January on record for the Mandurah line, member for Mandurah, with 1.7 million boardings, and the best January since pre-COVID for the Joondalup line, with 1.2 million boardings. The numbers go on.

This is all about making it more affordable for people to travel across the state. In regional WA there were also many initiatives rolled out in areas that have public transport services. We have increased the allowance in regional Western Australia for those who take their children to school. We have a two-zone fare cap for regional residents who fly, again saving regional residents hundreds of dollars at a time. We also distributed free SmartRiders to members of Parliament. We initially gave them 15 each, but they were so successful that we made sure a further 50 were sent out to all local members, including those in the opposition. I have not heard any thanks for that from the opposition, but do members know who opposed the initiative of giving free SmartRiders to the community?

**Mr R.H. Cook:** Who'd do that?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It was the Leader of the Liberal Party, members.

Several members interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It was the Leader of the Liberal Party who opposed it, saying —

... I question the Cook Labor Government's agenda with this particular scheme, ...

She opposed us giving free SmartRiders to the public to help them catch trains, buses and ferries for free on Sundays, for example, and during the summer. This is why the opposition, and the Liberal Party in particular, have never got public transport. It never gets public transport.

**Mr R.H. Cook:** They certainly never deliver it.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It sees public transport as some sort of evil to the community. It does not understand that it is about connecting people to jobs, connecting people to training opportunities and medical facilities, and letting people move around the suburbs at an affordable rate. We talk about the cost of living; having initiatives to support public transport, whether through capped fares or free public transport over summer, on Sundays or for students, is all about supporting people with the cost of living. Every time the opposition knocks public transport, it is knocking the government helping people with the cost of living. It does not matter how many years go by or how many times we demonstrate how our record compares with that of the opposition, the opposition's disregard and hatred for public transport continues to cut through. Its hatred for public transport is in its DNA. We are very proud of what we are delivering—affordable public transport that connects people and families, and gives Western Australians opportunities that they would never receive under a Liberal–National government.