



Speech by

Mr R. QUINN

MEMBER FOR ROBINA

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SENIORS CARD

Mr QUINN (Robina—Lib) (11.40 p.m.): Since its introduction, the Seniors Card has been of great benefit to many Queenslanders over a long period. Successive governments have improved the range of benefits to seniors in Queensland. The one area that needs attention is that there is no reciprocal arrangement between the state governments. This applies particularly to seniors when they travel. I think that there is an urgent need to have some reciprocal rights between the states so that seniors in Queensland can use the train to travel to New South Wales and can access the same sorts of benefits that they access in Queensland.

The Commonwealth government has come partially to the party. The last federal budget provided some \$25 million to partially fund reciprocal travel arrangements between the states. Unfortunately, the states have yet to agree in terms of the range of those reciprocal arrangements. I ask the Minister for Seniors in Queensland to try to expedite this matter as quickly as possible. A number of people in my area would like to take advantage of these additional funds that the Commonwealth has applied for this purpose, but until the states come together and provide an agreed framework in which this could occur, seniors in all states will continue to not have the range of benefits, I think, that they deserve.

Quite simply, they say to me that if they travel across the border, then there is no benefit to them in terms of using their card. They understand that every state in Australia has some form of Seniors Card, that there is a range of benefits available to them, and they really want some action on behalf of all state governments to try to redress what they think is a situation where commonsense should prevail. They equate it to something like a pension card. If people can use their pension card around Australia to access a range of benefits, and if every state has a Seniors Card, the same situation should apply.

Whilst the Commonwealth has put in \$25 million, it may not be what is required—but at least it is a start—and I ask the state government in this instance to work with the other state governments around Australia to try to start a process of getting some sort of range of standardised services and standardised benefits for seniors so that no matter where they travel around Australia they can access a range of suitable benefits. I think with more and more people travelling, particularly elderly people, this is an ideal opportunity for the state governments to work together to provide this sort of benefit, which I think what would be well received by seniors around Australia.