

**Question on Notice  
No. 854  
Asked on 24 May 2006**

MR MESSENGER asked the Minister for Health (MR ROBERTSON)-

QUESTION:

With reference to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme –

How much funding has been allocated to the scheme in 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06, and as recent increases in fuel costs have added to the financial burden on patients in rural and remote areas, when will the subsidy rate be increased and by how much, to bring equity into patients travel?

ANSWER:

Allocation for funding is included in the overall budgets allocated to Health Service Districts and is not a separate budgetary item. However, expenditure in 2003-04 was \$20.5 million, in 2004-05 it was \$22.5 million, and it is estimated that the total expenditure for 2005-06 will be approximately \$25 million.

The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, operated by Queensland Health, was recently examined in the Health Economist Review which was undertaken by The Allen Consulting Group and released on 29 March 2006.

My Department is undertaking a project examining some aspects of the Scheme, taking into account the analysis from this Review. Any changes or reforms for the Scheme and subsidy levels will be considered in the context of and aligned with the development of the Statewide Health Services Plan, due to be completed in December 2006.

Queensland Health has also endorsed an Implementation Plan "*Access to Health Services (Transport is the Key)*" to progress the management of patient access to health services. This Implementation Plan is providing a basis for reform to the patient transport service area with a particular focus on rural, regional and remote areas of Queensland.