

Question on Notice

No. 1726

Asked on Wednesday, 12 November 2008

MRS MENKENS asked the Minister for Communities, Minister for Disability Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Seniors and Youth (**MS NELSON-CARR**)–

How many payments were made by her department in 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09 as at 1 November 2008 (reported separately) for (a) pensioner and senior concessions for (i) rates (ii) electricity (iii) reticulated natural gas (iv) rail and (b) the South East Queensland Pensioner Water Subsidy Scheme?

ANSWER:

The Department of Communities administers a range of concessions to eligible pensioners, seniors and veterans throughout Queensland on essential services such as the following schemes.

(a) (i) The Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme provides a subsidy equivalent to 20 per cent – up to a maximum of \$180 per annum – off the gross rates and charges levied by local governments.

(a) (ii) The Electricity Rebate Scheme provides a maximum rebate of \$41.25 per quarter off the cost of an eligible person's domestic electricity supply.

The Electricity Life Support Concession Scheme assists seriously ill people on low incomes to meet the electricity costs of operating approved home-based life support systems and provides a concession of \$84 per quarter for an oxygen concentrator and \$56.25 per quarter for a kidney dialysis machine.

(a) (iii) The Reticulated Natural Gas Rebate Scheme, announced in October 2007, provides a maximum rebate of \$14.41 per quarter off the cost of an eligible person's domestic reticulated natural gas supply. Back payments up to \$55 for the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 have been made to approximately 45 000 households.

(a) (iv) The Department of Communities also administers the budget for the Rail Concessions Scheme, which is delivered by Queensland Rail to eligible card holders. The scheme covers discounted travel by pensioners and seniors on Citytrain's suburban and inter-urban rail services and Traveltrain's long distance rail services. It also covers expenditure incurred by pensioners utilising their free travel entitlement on Traveltrain's long distance rail services.

Data for access to this scheme is based on number of journeys, not number of persons.

Queensland Rail is not able to identify individual Citytrain ticket sales to the various concession card holder types and as such, I can only report on budget expenditure. This amounted to \$9.82 million in 2006-07; \$9.77 million in 2007-08 and \$2.32 million to 1 November 2008, for 2008-09.

(b) To lessen the impact of increased water prices on South East Queensland pensioners, the government established, as part of the 2008-09 State Budget announcements, the South East Queensland Pensioner Water Subsidy Scheme for eligible pensioners in the SEQ Water Grid area. The scheme provides a maximum subsidy of \$40 in 2008-09 and is in addition to the current Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme.

The provision of concessions to Queensland pensioners, seniors and veterans is a major commitment for the Queensland Government. Payments made to these schemes are as per the following table.

Year	Type of Concession	Number of households who received payment	Payments
2006-07	Rates	240 558	\$41.47 million
	Electricity	459 765	\$61.36 million
	Electricity Life Support	2 362	\$0.61 million
	Reticulated natural gas	n/a	n/a
	Rail (number of journeys)	179 981	\$23.12 million
	SEQ Pensioner water subsidy	n/a	n/a
2007-08	Rates	239 244	\$41.21 million
	Electricity	466 745	\$66.92 million
	Electricity Life Support	2 724	\$0.77 million
	Reticulated natural gas (approx)	45 000	n/a
	Rail (number of journeys)	176 575	\$23.68 million
	SEQ Pensioner water subsidy	n/a	n/a
2008-09	Rates	242 142	\$9.25 million
	Electricity	469 745	\$22.42 million
	Electricity Life Support	2 912	\$0.25 million
	Reticulated natural gas (approx)	35 000	n/a
	Rail (number of journeys)	49 457	\$6.94 million
	SEQ Pensioner water subsidy	54 701	\$0.34 million