

Question on Notice

No. 851

Asked on 26 May 2011

MR KILBURN asked the Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women (MS STRUTHERS)—

QUESTION

Will the Minister advise which Bligh Government programs and concessions are available to assist self-funded retirees and those on a part pension?

ANSWER

The Queensland Government provides the widest range of concessions in Australia and is committed to assisting Queenslanders to reduce the cost of living. That is why we have increased funding to \$1.385 billion in 2011–12 for concessions, retail discounts, rebates and assistance to families, pensioners and other Queenslanders in need.

As a means of targeting the majority of concessions towards low income earners and those people most in need, the Queensland Government links to means tested Commonwealth cards, such as a Pensioner Concession Card issued by either Centrelink or the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs or a Repatriation Health Card—for All Conditions (Gold Card) issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Pensioners on a part pension payment are able to access the same concessions as those on a full pension payment.

The range of concessions includes dental, spectacles supply, car and boat registration, electricity, reticulated natural gas, rates, water, public transport including local rail, bus and ferry travel and long-distance travel within Queensland, and a variety of health services.

The Queensland Seniors Card is provided by the Government in recognition of the needs of older retirees on fixed retirement incomes, such as self-funded retirees, regardless of whether their income is derived from a pension, superannuation or dividend from investments and as an acknowledgement of the contribution made by seniors to the community.

The Queensland Government targets its Seniors Card concessions to residents of the standard Commonwealth retirement age of 65 who have left the full-time workforce. It also targets the Seniors Card to those seniors in the 60 to 64 age bracket who have left the full-time workforce and who also qualify for a concession card from the Commonwealth Government (for example, a Health Care Card).

We've increased the SEQ Water Subsidy by 20% in addition to more than 6% increase on the Electricity Rebate, Electricity Life Support, Medical Cooling and Heating Electricity Concession and the Natural Gas Rebate.

From 1 July 2011, a self-funded retiree who holds a Seniors Card can access concessions on everyday cost of living expenses worth in excess of \$800 per household per year:

- \$230—Electricity
- \$63—Reticulated Natural Gas
- \$180 (average)—Motor Vehicle Registration
- \$65—Boat Registration
- \$150 est. (\$5 x 30 journeys)—Urban Public transport, Translink
- \$58 (average per journey)—Long distance intrastate, Traveltrain
- \$200 estimated for other concessions including dental, medical aids, spectacles and entry fees for leisure activities.

To assist Queenslanders, a comprehensive list of available Government concessions, rebates and assistance, as well as eligibility requirements, is available in the Every Dollar Counts—Concessions made easy booklet. This booklet is available by calling 13 QGOC (13 74 68) and requesting a copy or by viewing it online at www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/community/concessions, a one-stop shop which includes information on every rebate and concession available throughout the state government, making it easier for people to get the cost of living subsidies they are eligible for.

I thank the honourable Member for his support for these important Government initiatives.