

VETERANS — INITIATIVES

**72. Mr J. NORBERGER to the Minister for Veterans:**

My question is to the minister for veterans' affairs. Before I ask my question, I quickly acknowledge on behalf of the member for Southern River the year 9 students from Thornlie Christian College who are in the public gallery today.

I am asking, as a former serving member of the Royal Australian Air Force, could the minister please outline some of the new initiatives that the Liberal–National government has introduced since the election to support our veterans?

**The SPEAKER:** The minister for veterans' affairs.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:**

Just for the record, and for everyone in the chamber, I am actually the Minister for Veterans—full stop. Thank you, Mr Speaker; I am sure that you are aware of that.

I thank the member for Joondalup for his question. I know he has a particular interest in this issue, having served six years in the Royal Australian Air Force. On behalf of the members for Willagee, Warnbro, Churchlands and Rockingham and I, we welcome you to a rather special place. We are three a side now; there are a lot of us.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** We are looking at a number of issues. I want to acknowledge one of the issues that we have resolved. I thank the Minister for Transport for coming to the party to make life just that little bit easier for a small segment of the veterans' population in Western Australia. In particular, totally and permanently incapacitated and extreme disablement adjustment cardholders will now not have to pay for a driver's licence in Western Australia. The fee of \$37.60 a year that is charged at the moment will be waived. Previously, they were eligible for a 50 per cent discount on that fee. I think it is great that hundreds of veterans who are in those particular categories will be able to get their driver's licences for free from the Department of Transport in Western Australia. We are looking at doing a number of different things, and this is just the first one. This will be a great step forward in acknowledging the contribution that a lot of people have made in the service of their country. The total cost of this particular program will be an estimated \$42 500 a year, which is not an awful lot of money in the scheme of things, but for a lot of veterans who are on a pension, that is just that little bit extra that they do not have to worry about forking out money for.

I thank the member for Joondalup for asking the question. I thank the Minister for Transport for recognising the contribution that a number of veterans have made, particularly those who have a disability through their service, and for just making life that little bit easier for them. It is a very welcome achievement.