

SENIORS — COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES

433. Mrs A.K. HAYDEN to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's response yesterday in the house, when he confirmed he was completely unaware of his mean-spirited cuts to WA seniors. I refer the Premier also to his government's media release in July 2017, and I quote —

As of July 1, 2017, for households with only a WA Seniors Card, these rebates will be capped at \$100 each. This measure will save an estimated \$84 million.

Why is the Premier so out of touch with the harm he is inflicting on seniors, including cuts to seniors' rebates, and his failed attempt to inflict Labor's harmful retiree tax?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Can I ask the member for Darling Range a question? Are you one of those cowards the member for Scarborough is referring to? Are you one of those cowards?

Point of Order

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I have a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Have you finished your question?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Yes.

The SPEAKER: Okay. What is your point of order?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Standing order 78 states —

An answer must be relevant to the question.

We are in question time. The Premier ought to answer what he was asked.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! The Premier.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will explain to the member. We made some changes in 2017 to deal with the forty-plus billion dollars' worth of debt left by the Liberals and Nationals. That is what we did. If the member wants to know the history of the Seniors Card, it was a Labor initiative. The member would not know. Her knowledge of history is not great. It was a Labor initiative. It offers a range of discounts to people across the community. It is the most generous card of its type in the entire country. I repeat: there is a significant issue in Western Australia today. That is the fact that the Liberal Party will not reveal —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, if you keep interjecting, there will be no MPI.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Liberal Party will not reveal the secret deal between the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, and what has gone on and what arrangements are in place in the Liberal Party in relation to these matters. I think the public of Western Australia has a right to know what is going on. The Leader of the Opposition will not even ask me a question. He is too afraid to stand up and ask a question, because he might have to explain himself. The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party sits there, tapping away on her phone, and paying no attention to Parliament, like usual, so that she does not have to stand up.

Point of Order

Dr D.J. HONEY: Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, if you keep going, we will not have time to do the MPI.

Dr D.J. HONEY: My point of order is under standing order 78. This has nothing whatever to do with the question asked by the member.

The SPEAKER: Okay. It is not a point of order. Premier, you will get back to the point.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN: Considering that the member for Cottesloe stood up, I want to quote what he had to say last night. He was asked a question, "Will the member for Riverton be the leader at the next election?", and he

answered, “I’m sure he’ll be there this morning”! I think you are the anonymous coward! I think you are the one who the member for Scarborough is referring to! I think it is you, and I think it is the member for Bateman.

Withdrawal of Remark

Dr D.J. HONEY: Mr Speaker, I believe that the Premier used an unparliamentary term in referring to me—it is standing order 92. He referred to me as a coward, Mr Speaker.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I never heard it. Premier, withdraw, if you did say that, please.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I withdraw —

The SPEAKER: No, no more.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have not finished my answer.

The SPEAKER: No. I am saying no more on the withdrawal.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr M. McGOWAN: I note that the government spends \$2.4 billion on concessions and subsidies to support families and seniors across Western Australia, and they have been indexed in the budget in line with inflation. The energy assistance payment has been increased to \$300, and is paid to around 200 000 households. The dependent child rebate has been indexed and is \$320 for the first child and \$83 for each subsequent child. The cost-of-living rebate and the water services rebate is 25 per cent for seniors and 50 per cent for concession card holders. The local government rates rebate is 25 per cent for seniors and 50 per cent for concession card holders.

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The emergency services levy rebate is 25 per cent for seniors and 50 per cent for concession card holders.

The SPEAKER: Premier, you are running out of time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: She asked me a question, Mr Speaker.

We have reinstated financial counselling for those people in need, which the former government got rid of, by the Salvation Army and organisations like that. We have reinstated funding for the hardship utility grant program, and grants of up to \$581 are available.

One thing that the people of Western Australia and Australia can always be assured of is that only Labor stands up for people who are on lower incomes, people who might struggle in life, people who need support. It is always Labor.

Dr M.D. Nahan: What a joke!

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Leader of the Opposition has the courage to interject, but he does not have the courage to stand and ask a question. The member for Scarborough sits there, while plotting for the leadership. Both of them need to come clean on exactly what is going on.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.