

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pensioners left behind in NSW Budget as Regional Seniors Travel Card axed

“CPSA welcomes the news of increases in existing cost-of-living supports in the 2023-24 NSW Budget, but calls for the NSW Government to commit to continuing the [NSW Regional Seniors Travel Card](#),” said CPSA’s Senior Policy Officer Ash Fowler.

The NSW Regional Seniors Travel Card provides eligible seniors living in regional, rural and remote areas of NSW with a \$250 prepaid card to go towards the cost of travel. The card can be used to pay for pre-booked NSW TrainLink regional trains and coaches, fuel, as well as taxis. There has been a strong regional campaign to keep the card.

“The NSW Regional Seniors Travel Card has helped older people in regional, rural and remote areas of NSW to stay connected. The loss of this card will be felt keenly by pensioners who are already struggling to make ends meet as living costs continue to climb,” said CPSA’s Senior Policy Officer Ash Fowler.

While no axing has been formally announced, the budget allocation for the NSW Regional Seniors Travel Card for 2023-24 appears to be only sufficient to honour cards already in circulation. Applications for NSW Regional Seniors Travel Cards have been suspended since 7 July, 2023.

“In many parts of NSW there is not enough affordable, accessible transport. The NSW Regional Seniors Travel Card has provided older people with the means to get to medical appointments, visit family and pick up groceries. It is disappointing that this much-needed financial support is being ended when there has been no significant

improvement in transport options for rural, regional and remote communities,” said CPSA’s Senior Policy Officer Ash Fowler.

“CPSA welcomes increases in energy rebates. The Low-Income Household Rebate as well as the Medical Energy Rebate will go from \$285 to \$350. The Seniors Energy Rebate for self-funded retirees will rise from \$200 to \$250 and the Life Support Energy Rebate has also received a significant boost from \$1,343 to \$1,639. It is currently unclear whether eligible customers living in places which have private energy networks will receive a similar increase, or how much that might be”.

“CPSA welcomes the NSW Government commitment to providing 1500 additional social housing dwellings under the \$610.1 million Commonwealth Social Housing Accelerator program. The percentage of older people that own their own homes is declining and due to an undersupply of social housing, more people over 65 are experiencing housing insecurity in the private rental market. Rates of homelessness amongst older people, particularly older women, continue to rise. CPSA calls on the NSW Government to lower the eligibility age for the social housing priority list from 80 to 65”.

“CPSA welcomes the announcement that \$300 million has been allocated to improve the accessibility of train stations and carparks in NSW. This includes the installation of lifts, ramps and footbridges”.

MEDIA CONTACT

Ash Fowler
Senior Policy Officer

ash.fowler@cpsa.org.au
0488 788 591

CPSA is a non-profit, non-party-political membership association founded in 1931 which serves pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees. CPSA’s aim is to improve the standard of living and well-being of its members and constituents. CPSA receives funding support from the NSW Government Departments of Communities & Justice and NSW Health.