

Media Release – The Hon Shelley Payne MLC

Boost to PATS fuel subsidy provides regional cost-of-living relief

5 August 2024

- Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) fuel subsidy to increase by more than 50 per cent
- \$13.1 million investment in PATS supports regional patients travelling for treatment
- Cook Government supporting cost-of-living relief for regional Western Australians

The Cook Government will increase the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) fuel subsidy to recognise the significant increase in fuel costs and help regional Western Australians with cost-of-living pressures.

Currently, the PATS fuel subsidy is \$0.16 per kilometre. The Cook Government is investing \$13.1 million to increase the subsidy to \$0.26 per kilometre for the next four years.

The popular program subsidises the cost of travel and accommodation for regional Western Australians who need to travel long distances for specialist medical care.

In 2022-23, PATS supported 35,038 regional Western Australians to make 73,383 trips to access specialist health services.

Today's announcement builds on the State Government's move to substantially increase the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme accommodation subsidy by 83 per cent, and expand eligibility to enable vulnerable patients to travel with a support person.

The Cook Government is committed to supporting Western Australians living in the regions, with a recent increase to the value of the Regional Pensioner Travel Card, additional investment to continue the Regional Airfare Zone Cap scheme, the WA Student Assistance Payment and \$400 electricity credits all helping to ease cost-of-living pressures.

Comments attributed to Member for the Agricultural Region Hon Shelley Payne MLC:

"The cost of fuel should not be a barrier to accessing specialist medical treatment in Perth, which is why we're increasing the PATS fuel subsidy by more than 50 per cent.

"I understand how important PATS is to those living in our regional communities and know this increase to the fuel subsidy will be welcomed by many."

Comments attributed to Premier Roger Cook:

"The increase to the PATS fuel subsidy recognises the rise in fuel costs and the financial burden this is placing on Western Australians who need to travel for specialist medical treatment.

"My Government is improving equity and access to medical specialist services for Western Australians who live in the bush."

Comments attributed to Health Minister Amber-Jade Sanderson:

"We know the burden of increased fuel costs is being felt by regional Western Australians who need to travel for medical treatment.

"The increase to the fuel subsidy will help with cost-of-living pressures and ensure all Western Australians can access specialist medical treatment no matter where they live."

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