

Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for Trade, Investment and Economic Development

Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Questions on Notice Paper No 42

17 May 2024

Question No. 1894

JAMES MILLIGAN MLA: To ask the Treasurer

Why are Commonwealth Seniors Health Card Holders excluded from the electricity concession scheme in the ACT and what is the rationale behind this decision?

ANDREW BARR MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The ACT offers a range of concessions, including the Utilities Concession, that provide targeted cost of living support to low income and vulnerable households. These concessions are generally available to Commonwealth concession card holders receiving income support payments, such as the Age Pension, Jobseeker or Youth Allowance, to target support to lower income households who need it most. In general, individuals who receive Commonwealth income support do not have any other means of income and therefore require the most assistance to pay for household basics such as utilities.

In comparison, the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) is a concession card to get cheaper health care and some other health-related discounts if you have reached Age Pension age. The CSHC has a moderate to high income threshold (\$90,000 a year for singles, \$144,000 a year for couples) that is higher than for concession cards held by those receiving income support payments. The income test limits for a Low Income Health Care Card (LIC) is significantly lower (\$35,457 a year for singles, \$60,799 a year for couples). Individuals who earn less than \$680 (singles) or \$1,166 (couples) per week over eight weeks can apply for the LIC and subsequently receive the Utilities Concession.

Senior households that meet the income and asset tests for the Age Pension are also eligible for the Pensioner Concession Card and are entitled to the Utilities Concession. I also note that all households including seniors will also be eligible for Commonwealth energy bill relief of \$300 in 2024-25.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Andrew Barr MLA

Treasurer

Date: 14.6.24

This response required 65 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$126.