

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE
(Of which some notice has been given)

Tuesday 17 June, 2014

Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Commerce

With regard to the District Allowance (DA) paid to Government officers and government wages employees living in remote and rural parts of Western Australia, I ask:

1. Has there been a reduction in the rate of DA payable to government wages employees in some places?
 - a. If so, when did this occur and in which places
 2. Are the towns and zones in which DA has been reduced now cheaper places in which to live and will the Minister please table the details?
 3. Will the Minister please explain his decisions for reducing DA in some places while increasing payments in others?
-

Answer:

1. Yes.
 - 1.a. Employees in the following districts and specified towns will receive a reduced DA rate:
 - Kimberley (excluding Broome);
 - Pilbara (including Karratha/Dampier);
 - Gascoyne (excluding Carnarvon);
 - Mid-West (excluding Geraldton); and
 - Goldfields-Esperance (excluding Esperance and Warburton).

The reductions apply from 15 April 2014 for new employees and those moving between districts. For other employees, reductions will apply from 1 July 2014.

2. The relative cost of living in regional areas of Western Australia compared to Perth is measured by the Regional Price Index (RPI). The RPI is determined through a survey of large regional centres and selected towns throughout regional WA, conducted every two years and published by the Department of Regional Development.

The survey compares the price of a basket of goods and services in regional WA with the same basket of goods in Perth. The basket includes over 500 goods and services including food, clothing, housing costs, health and personal care and transport.

The 2013 RPI reveals changes in the cost of living across a number of regional areas, with the most notable being reductions in Northern WA.

The 2013 RPI is published on the Department of Regional Development website.

3. The methodology for calculating DA arises from the District Allowance (Government Officers) General Agreement 2010 and the District Allowance (Government Wages Employees) General Agreement 2010 (the Agreements).

The Agreements provide for the DA rates to rise and fall based on cost of living changes identified by the RPI.

The methodology for calculating DA, including the rise and fall component, was agreed to by all employer and union respondents to the Agreements.



Chris Smith