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Deputy Premier

Minister for Regional NSW, Industry and Trade

Paul Toole

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads

Dominic Perrottet

Treasurer

MEDIA RELEASE

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*****Press conference and interviews with regional seniors available to download below***

MORE SENIORS TO BENEFIT FROM REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD

More than 300,000 seniors in the regions will benefit from reduced travel costs with the NSW Government committing \$246 million to extend the Regional Seniors Travel Card for an additional two years.

The Regional Seniors Travel Card is a \$250 prepaid Visa card designed to ease the burden of travel costs for eligible seniors in rural, regional and remote areas.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro said seniors across NSW have benefited from the initial two-year travel card trial, with 337,500 cards issued in 2020 and more than 330,000 cards issued to regional seniors in 2021 so far.

“Living in regional NSW is rewarding in so many ways, but every day we struggle with the tyranny of distance,” Mr Barilaro said.

“This card has made a huge difference to the lives of seniors living in the bush who have fewer transport options than those living in the city and we’re excited to announce it will be offered again in 2022 and 2023.”

Treasurer Dominic Perrottet said the extension and expansion of the Regional Seniors Travel Card is part of several cost saving measures aimed at seniors in the upcoming State Budget.

“We know the cost of living is a big issue facing seniors and households, which is why the Regional Seniors Travel Card is being offered to even more people,” Mr Perrottet said.

“Increased funding will allow us to extend the card from 2022 to more seniors in the regions, including those eligible for the Age Pension and receiving either a Disability Support Pension or a Carer Payment from Services Australia.”

Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Paul Toole said the Regional Seniors Travel Card has provided a significant boost to businesses across our regions.

“Having an extra \$250 in their pocket has made it easier for regional seniors to get to the shops and medical appointments and stay connected locally and with friends and

family living in other parts of the State. It's also injected more than \$108 million into regional economies, benefitting local taxi operators and fuel stations," Mr Toole said.

"We've been reviewing the schemes that support people with disability and carers to ensure they meet the needs of those in the regions, including investing in community transport and a new smart card for the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme. We know these groups would also like to be eligible for the Regional Seniors Travel Card and we're pleased to be able to make that happen as part of the next phase of this program."

Member for Coffs Harbour Gurmesh Singh said it was great to see the program continue to expand, after first being trialed in Coffs Harbour.

"Coffs Harbour seniors were the first to try the Regional Seniors Travel Card a year and a half ago and it's wonderful to see how far the scheme has come since. It's made a huge impact on our community and I'm glad it is set to continue for two more years," Mr Singh said.

The Regional Seniors Travel Card can be used for pre-booked NSW Trainlink Regional trains and coaches, fuel and taxis.

From 2022, eligible applicants will include seniors who have reached the Age Pension age and are receiving:

- The Age Pension through Services Australia or the Department of Veterans' Affairs
- A Disability Support Pension or a Carer Payment from Services Australia
- A Service Pension issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs
- A Disability Pension through the Department of Veterans' Affairs under the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986
- A War Widow(er)'s Pension issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

People who hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card issued by Services Australia or the Department of Veterans' Affairs are also eligible.

The regional boundaries for applicants will remain the same in 2022. More information about which regional areas are included in this initiative can be found at www.service.nsw.gov.au.

****Press conference available to download here:**
<https://spaces.hightail.com/receive/2C8yhDKyNg>

****Interviews and olay with seniors available to download here:**
<https://spaces.hightail.com/receive/KyhNmTMqzi>

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