

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mrs Hersey to the Minister for Seniors:

**Seniors Recognition Scheme**

1. **How many Territorians are currently on the Seniors Recognition Scheme?**

**Answer:**

As at 31 July 2022 there were a total of 15,365 approved members on the Northern Territory Seniors Recognition Scheme (NTSRS).

2. **How many Territorians who were on the Seniors Recognition Scheme in 2020-21 did not renew in 2021-22? How many have not renewed for 2022-23?**

**Answer:**

**2021-22:** 849

**2022-23:** 682

Suspended members have been contacted via sms, email or post to advise of their membership suspension and are encouraged to complete a renewal by 30 September, to have their membership reinstated and the NTSRS prepaid card issued for 2022-23. If they do not renew by 30 September, their membership will be cancelled.

3. **How many new members joined the Seniors Recognition Scheme in the 2021-22 financial year?**

**Answer:**

In 2021-22, 16,385 NTSRS members were issued with prepaid cards. This includes 1,721 new members who joined the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme or had their membership reactivated.

4. **How many complaints were received regarding the Seniors Recognition Scheme in the 2021-22 financial year? Please provide an overview of the content of the complaints.**

**Answer:**

In 2021-22, there was a total of four complaints relating to the NTSRS referred by the Department's Complaints and Appeals unit for resolution.

One complaint related to the NTSRS delivery in July 2021, this was due to a misunderstanding by the member. Once the 20 working day manufacture and delivery process was explained the member was satisfied and the card was received in August 2021.

Two complaints were prospective members who were not approved to be on the scheme due to insufficient identity documents provided. Both members have since provided the correct documents and are on the scheme.

One complaint concerned a member who had not received his replacement NTSRS card. However, the member was no longer residing in the NT and not eligible to receive the card.

5. **How many Territorians appealed a decision not to be granted access to the Seniors Recognition Scheme? How many were successful in their appeals?**

**Answer:**

There is currently no appeals from applicants who were unsuccessful in relation to their application to the scheme.

6. **How many recipients of the NT Seniors Recognition Scheme expended their entire prepaid card in the 2021-22 financial year?**

**Answer:**

On 30 June 2022, over 85 per cent of members issued with a prepaid card had less than \$1 remaining.

7. **What happens to the remainder on a prepaid card if it is not used in the financial year?**

**Answer:**

The balance on the card at 30 June expires and returns to the Department's bank account.

8. **How many disputes on payments have been made in the 2021-22 financial year? What were the outcomes?**

**Answer:**

There have been three known disputes on payments in the previous financial year. The card provider manages payment disputes relating to the NTSRS prepaid card. Transactions that are confirmed to have occurred due theft or error by vendors are reimbursed by the provider to the member's card.

9. **Has any review of the Seniors Recognition Scheme taken place since 2018?**

**Answer:**

Since the implementation of the NTSRS the Department has demonstrated a commitment to robust administration of the scheme and continuous improvement.

In 2019, a prepaid card was introduced to make it easier for seniors to access the benefits of the card. This change was in direct response to feedback from members, vendors, the Ministerial Advisory Council for Senior Territorians and other senior stakeholder groups.

Following the implementation of the NTSRS the Department also undertook an internal audit of the scheme in 2020-21. Findings have been implemented.

In 2021, following a review of membership and utilisation of NTSRS; the eligibility criteria and use of the prepaid card was expanded to increase accessibility and the benefit to members on the scheme. Under this expansion long-term temporary visa holders who are Medicare recipients were included in the eligibility criteria. The expansion also allowed for prepaid cards to be used at almost any business, rather than limited to travel, fuel and utilities.