

Why the reform?

It was important that the scheme was reviewed and is reformed to ensure it is fair, efficient and administratively robust.

Territory Families undertook extensive public consultation to inform the reform of the NT Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme. The review collated independent feedback from the public and government stakeholders, a 6,000-strong petition led by peak seniors' organisations, and the views of more than 10,000 Territorians.

Through the consultation process, it was clear that Territorians highly value the scheme. The feedback received from seniors and the wider Territory community was comprehensive and extremely valuable in helping to develop the recommendations to reform the scheme.

We have listened and the schemes have been reformed to:

- Recognise and celebrate all senior Territorians 65 years and over.
- Include access to concessions for intrastate travel within the Territory for the first time.
- Make the distribution of concessions as fair and sustainable as possible for all Territorians including the capping of utilities concessions.
- Modernise concessions and the administration of the schemes, including strict measures to prevent any fraudulent activity or the misuse of funds.
- Ensure that more senior Territorians living in remote areas have access to the scheme than ever before.

Thank you to all those who provided feedback and participated in the consultation process. Copies of the consultation report and independent reports are available at Territory Families shopfronts and on the website.

What now?

The existing scheme will continue to be administered in the current format by Territory Families, with the new schemes to commence from 1 July 2018. Until that time, there will be no changes to the existing scheme for current members.

Over the coming months, Territory Families will provide more information about the new schemes and ensure all members' details are up to date.

We will also be in contact with seniors' representative groups and organisations to discuss the changes to the schemes, and will be making improvements to the way members update their details and access the schemes.

Where can I find more information?



You can find more information on the new schemes by visiting ntconcessions.nt.gov.au.

Alternatively, you can contact the Territory Families Concessions Unit on 1800 777 704 or pensionconcessionunit@nt.gov.au; or visit a Territory Families shopfront and talk to one of our staff.

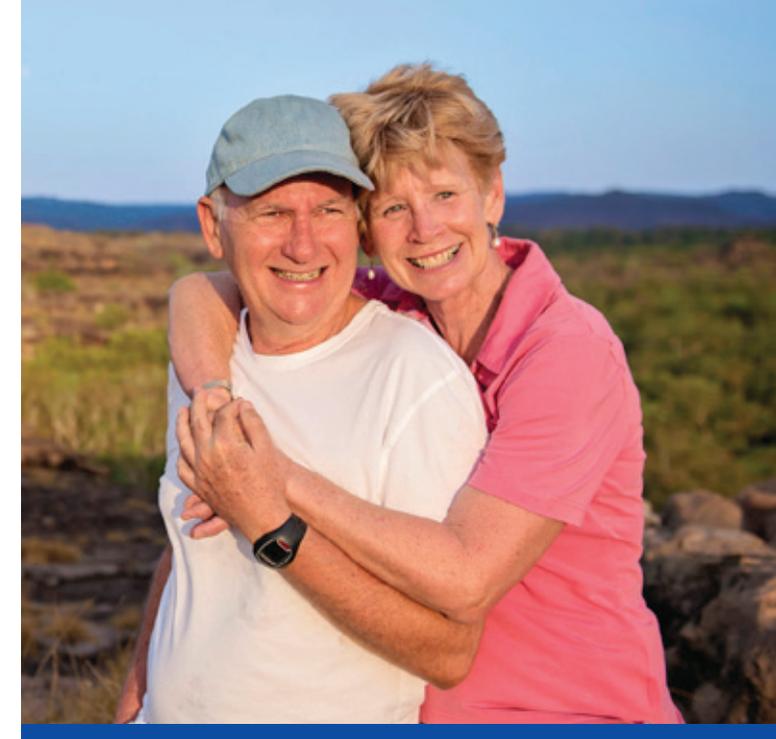


**Recognising
Senior Territorians**

Introducing the new

Northern Territory Concession Scheme &

Seniors Recognition Scheme



Introduction

The Northern Territory Government is committed to recognising and valuing senior Territorians, along with providing cost of living support to those who need it most.

Following extensive Territory-wide community consultation, the NT Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme has been reviewed and will be reformed.

The Northern Territory Government will invest an additional \$4.9M into the schemes in 2017/2018, and a further \$7M in 2018/2019, which will benefit all Territorians from now, and into the future.

From 1 July 2018, there will be two schemes. No changes will be made to the current scheme prior to this date.

The existing NT Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme will become the **Northern Territory Concession Scheme**.

A brand new scheme, the **Seniors Recognition Scheme**, will be created to recognise and celebrate all senior Territorians 65 years and over. Territorians may be eligible for both schemes.

The Northern Territory Concession Scheme and the Seniors Recognition Scheme are the most generous schemes of their type in Australia.

- The Northern Territory is the only jurisdiction in Australia which will offer annual travel concessions to all seniors aged 65 years and over.
- The NT Government has gone beyond its election commitment to seniors by providing \$500 every year rather than \$350.
- The schemes will enable more fair and equitable access for regional and remote scheme members.

From February 2018, COTA NT will be managing the Northern Territory Seniors Card Program. This program will also be reformed to provide more business discounts and other exciting initiatives for senior Territorians 60 and over.



Northern Territory Concession Scheme

The new **Northern Territory Concession Scheme** is a means-tested scheme aimed at providing assistance and support with the cost of living in the NT to those most in need.

The reformed scheme will:

- Improve access and fairness for its current and new members.
- Support eligible pensioners, including recipients of the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Department of Veteran Affairs Pension, Carer Payment or Parenting Payment (singles).

To access the NT Concession Scheme, you must be an eligible commonwealth pension recipient by receiving one of the above payments.

The NT Concession Scheme will operate in the same way as the current scheme and include the same concessions, apart from the introduction of capped amounts for electricity and water concessions.

The eight nominated concessions are still available under the NT Concession Scheme - electricity, water, sewerage, property rates, garbage, motor vehicle registration, driver's licences and spectacles.

If you are a current eligible member of the NT Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme you will be grandfathered into the NT Concession Scheme. Grandfathering honours the previous level of commitment that former governments have made to scheme members while they are still in receipt of their benefit or are 65 or over.

Seniors Recognition Scheme

A brand new scheme, the **Seniors Recognition Scheme** will be created to recognise the contributions that senior Territorians continue to make to the Northern Territory.

All senior Territorians 65 years and over are entitled to be members of this scheme and will receive a \$500 concession per year for utilities and/or travel. This will now also include travel within the NT.

The new scheme ensures the 3,000 senior Territorians excluded in the current scheme when means-testing was introduced in 2014 will be eligible. All Territorians 65 years and over will be acknowledged through the Seniors Recognition Scheme and are entitled to the nominated concessions.

