

I am not at all educated in tax matters and so I am just giving my viewpoint as a 71 year old living near Carnarvon, north of the 26th parallel.

I think we should get increased tax relief because our taxes are sent to Canberra and returned in part to each state where they are spent unevenly on our population. If I lived in Perth I could take advantage of cheap or free public transport due to my age. Public transport abounds in regions of high population, but not in and around Carnarvon.

Yes, old age pensioners get a free trip to Perth once a year to make up for it but that is not available for old people who are not on the old age pension, i.e. not available for tax paying old people or self-funded retirees. That is one example. And, by the way, we'd prefer old age pensioners are given a free trip to our town and they would see for themselves that this is where they should retire! Why is an annual trip to the city meant to make up for our daily lack of public transport?

Previous comments worry about constitutions which speak of treating everyone the same. Well our WA Constitution was drawn up on condition that we people north of the 26th parallel are treated differently to those in the south. That was the condition that the Swan River Colony was granted statehood. Great Britain could see that one person one vote meant that the south would always out-vote the north and therefore the north would never develop. I trust the lawyers on the panel will agree that the spirit of the WA Constitution is to allow special laws to encourage development of the remoter regions of the state. One way was to rule that remote people had more voting power. Since the WA Constitution was drawn up the Commonwealth has taken over the job of taxing us all on income, previously a state power. However, the spirit of our WA constitution should be adhered to.

I could write a list of things we miss out on in the bush, enjoyed by our fellow West Australians in the city, but I do not think any of us are asking for rebates out of envy of closely settled people. What we are all too aware of is that city population is on the rise because people are attracted to the extras available in the city. This is very bad for each state and for each city. We need to use the tool of taxation to develop the regions, especially the remote ones. Taxation relief is one way we can encourage people to leave the cities. Otherwise we will continue to have streets of empty affordable houses in country townships and increasingly overcrowded cities.