

Test fees under attack

■ Mitchell Smith

The Barnett Government's decision to abolish the universal tariff for motor vehicle examinations has been criticised by the Labor Member for the Mining and Pastoral Region Stephen Dawson, who says it will mean fees in regional WA will be up to 19 per cent higher than in Perth.

He said the move was a significant shift in policy by the Barnett Government to move to full cost recovery for services in regional WA.

"Pilbara residents should be paying the same fees as residents in Perth," he said.

"People in the Pilbara already have to deal with a higher cost of living, but to charge us a higher fee to access Government services is an outrage.

"What is the point of Royalties for Regions if Pilbara residents are forced to dip into their own pocket just to access basic services?"

Mr Dawson said the increases were unfair and the Government knew it.

But a spokeswoman for Transport Minister Dean Nalder said the Department of Transport was improving the

community's access to services through an expanded network of service delivery part-

ners.

These included the 226 Authorised Inspection Stations providing vehicle examinations across the State.

"AISs form part of DoT's commitment to give regional and remote customers access to a convenient choice of quality services and locations," she said.

"Following industry concern regarding difficulty in attracting and retaining AIS in regional areas, the AIS fee structure has been aligned to

the Regional Price Index from July 1, 2014. The RPI was developed by the Department of Regional Development as the most appropriate measure available for calculating cost differentials between Perth and the regions."

The spokeswoman said the differentials were calculated by identifying the cost of a selection of commonly used goods and services in Perth compared with regional locations.

"This fee alignment enhances the viability and continuation of remote and regional AIS service delivery," she said.