

**Frank Vajda MD FRCP FRACP**  
**Riddare av Kungl. Nordstjerneorden 1<sup>st</sup> kl (Sverige)**  
**Professor of Clinical Neuropharmacology**  
**Department of Medicine and Neurosciences, Monash University**

Mr. Elton Humphery  
Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate

PO Box 610  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600



12 July 2007

Dear Sir,

May I please make a brief submission to the Standing Committee on Community Affairs

I wish comment on the effect of escalating petrol and food prices on the living standards and the quality of life of pensioners and of people on a low income. The effect of these rises impose a disproportionately heavy burden on the above groups. If a person on a low income has to pay 10 or 20 cents per litre extra on petrol, this may amount to 500 to a 1000 dollars annually, in excess of previously required expenses.

This figure is trivial to someone earning an income of say 60,000 dollars or more annually, but is a considerable burden to pensioners. The same applies to the cost of essential foods.

What I wish to suggest for consideration, whether essential food items and petrol could be obtained at a concessional rate for pensioners and possibly for lower income groups, or health card holders.

The cost of travel on public transport and entertainment, and more importantly medical expenses through Medicare and the costs of pharmaceuticals are already reduced for those in need, by the mechanisms of pensioner cards and senior citizen cards.

Would it be possible for these groups to obtain concessions, on production of their appropriate cards, to cover the costs of food and petrol in order to redress an imbalance and alleviate hardship

Yours sincerely,

FJE Vajda  
Professor Of Clinical Neuropharmacology  
Monash University

**Foundation Director, Australian Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Clinical  
Neuropharmacology, University of Melbourne, St Vincent's Hospital and  
Monash Medical Centre, Monash University, Clayton Rd, Clayton, Vic. 3168,  
Tel: (613) 95945507, E-mail : Frank.Vajda@med.monash.edu.com.au  
and [vajda@netspace.net.au](mailto:vajda@netspace.net.au) , Tel & FAX: ( 61 3) 9819 3956**