



11-07-07.

The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs Committee
Parliament House A.C.T.

Dear Committee

I am a 75 year old Aged Pensioner, born 09-09-31
I reside in a rented unit in the outskirts
of Melbourne.

My first comment is to make the committee
aware that its preference for electronically
submitted comment, which I assume to
via personal computer and the internet,
is beyond the affordability of the large
majority of old, old Australian
pensioners over 70.

However, don't feel that you are singled out,
I am constantly annoyed by the fact that
everybody assumes that everybody can afford
a computer with ongoing upgrades, protection
and the ever increasing cost of monthly
internet access.

Then of course is the ageing mind and the
increasing loss of general comprehension, and
in particular technical comprehension,
and Oh, I nearly forgot, memory.

Addressing The Terms of Reference -

(a) Cost of living pressures.

I feel it is critically important to emphasise that the age pension is definitely not keeping up with essentials such as food and petrol.

As a renter I am alarmed at increases in the cost of rental property over the last 2-3 years and the predicted ongoing price increases.

All in Victoria have been warned to expect dramatic increases in the cost of electricity and water in particular.

(b) Impact on living standards.

Personally I am just managing because my Age Pension is being topped up with two small allocated pensions.

I have absolutely no doubt that I could not exist on the Age Pension alone, and I refuse to dwell on the consequences. (DWD).

(c) I have reasonable contact and an excellent relationship with my two children and grandchildren. I only wish I could do more to help them.

(d) Although the taxable income limit has been raised to \$24,867 - it is still far too low and should be at least \$28,500 -

(e) No comment, -

Specific Comment

* Because I am basically dependent on the Age Pension which is always in a "catch up" mode I believe it is currently inadequate with cost of living pressures that are NOW. The Age Pension has not kept up with increased costs of FOOD, PETROL, RENT and Utility prices, over the last 12-18 months.

* For my age I am enjoying a reasonable "Quality of Life", I am independent and have most of my marbles. I have vowed to my family and friends that I will not end up in Aged Care while I have control of my life.

Along with over 80% of all Australians I believe I should have the right to decide when I wish to die. I am a staunch advocate of DYING WITH DIGNITY. (Voluntary Euthanasia) based purely on the concept of "Quality of Life".

My mother was in aged care for more than ten (10) years, and my ex wife has been in aged care since Jan 2007.

The latest available official figures 2004 - 2005 show that over 1,218,000 Australian are in aged care. The current real number could be well in excess of 1,500,000.

It has become increasingly difficult to find HIGH CARE beds in aged care facilities, with many being kept in hospitals. It is possible that as many as 500,000 patients classified as high care exist in aged care facilities and hospitals.

From my experiences I know that the majority of HIGH CARE aged patients experience little or no quality of life. Had legislation been in place when these people had their faculties and enjoyed a reasonable quality of life they may have elected to "Die With Dignity" and end their life instead of living in misery with no quality of life and no purpose.

I apologise for departing from the Terms of Reference, however if the Federal Government have real concerns about the living pressures and welfare of older Australians they must introduce legislation that will give people the right to choose when to end their life and Die With Dignity.

Sincerely
Ralph R. Foster