

Elton

Please refer to letter of the 14 Oct 2005

Australian Government provides financial assistance direct to Australian Local Councils now totals more than \$1.1 billion, this funding is increased every year.

Councils also receive \$600 million a year to fund local roads

This does not include other funding from Federal or State Governments, or Councils annual excessive rate increases.

Australian Constitution.

To be fully enforced by the Commonwealth Government.

The Federal Government has power over State and State over Local Governments.

The Seniors and aged pensioner home owners in the State of Queensland to be treated as equal Australian citizens as Southern counterparts Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia in Local Government remissions and concessions.

Submission on Council rating systems

- A/ 50 percent concession on Council general rates.
- B/ 50 percent Concession on Water and Sewerage.
- C/ 50 percent Concession on Water consumption.
- D/ pensioner home owners to be exempt from any payments to Councils of increased land valuations by State authorities.

Reply from m/s Judy Spence MP ALP  
Minister for Seniors 06 Oct 2003

Rob Whiddon Chief of Staff Premier's Department  
9 November 2005.

Re: State Government subsidies for Seniors.  
The disparity on concessions, remissions for  
Seniors only apply to Southern Labor States, not  
applicable for Queensland aged pensioner home  
owners.

All other correspondence received from State  
Labor ministers and attached replies are  
totally flawed, this information has been  
sent to the Federal Attorney General Canberra.  
for a full investigation

Please refer to Kevin Rudd MP

It is also to be noted my allegations  
are not unfounded.



Judy Spence MP

06 OCT 2003

P M McSpadden

Minister for  
**Families**

Minister for  
**Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Policy**

Minister for  
**Disability Services**

Minister for  
**Seniors**

Dear P M McSpadden

I refer to your letter of 7 July 2003 to Senator John Hogg concerning a number of issues including the Queensland Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme. As I have Ministerial responsibility for the Scheme, I have been requested to respond to you.

As you are aware, the Scheme provides a State Government subsidy equivalent to 20% of the gross rates and charges levied by a local government up to a maximum of \$180 per annum. The maximum level of the subsidy has been increased on four occasions since the rate subsidy was introduced in 1980.

Whilst the maximum pensioner rate subsidy has remained at the current level of \$180, the total budget for the Scheme has increased from \$27.13 million in 1992-93 to \$46.650 million in 2003-04. This expenditure has grown significantly due to increases in the number of Queenslanders who receive pensions. There are currently over 247,000 pensioner households in receipt of the subsidy.

The Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme is administered by the Department of Families in collaboration with 122 participating local governments throughout Queensland. The Department reimburses local governments for the subsidies received by eligible pensioner property owners.

The provision of concessions to pensioners, seniors and veterans is a major commitment of the Queensland Government with in excess of \$430 million of taxpayers' funds used for this purpose annually. These concessions aim to assist Queensland pensioners and seniors with services such as electricity, public transport, motor vehicle and boat registration and a range of health services, including dental, optical and ambulance services.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that the entitlements of pensioners are sustainable over the coming decades.

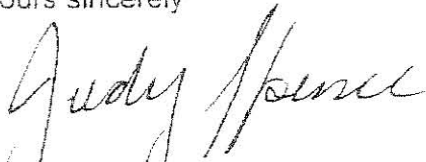
Each state and territory is responsible for funding concessions from within their budgets and therefore offer a range of different concessions to holders of a Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, and Seniors Card and other concession cards.

The Queensland Government is mindful of the significance that concessions provide to people on fixed low incomes. Although an increase in the maximum level of the subsidy is not possible at this time, this issue will continue to be monitored in the context of ongoing budget reviews.

In addition to the Queensland Government funded Scheme, many local governments provide an additional remission to pensioner ratepayers under the *Local Government Act 1993*. Local governments are able to establish the eligibility criteria for their schemes, and have the discretionary power to determine the rate of remission offered. These remissions are funded from within a local government's resources.

I trust this information is of assistance. If you have any further questions please contact Ms Tiona Evans, Program Development Officer, Concessions Unit, on 3247 9126.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Spence". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

Judy Spence MP  
**Minister for Families and Minister for Seniors**



Rob Whiddon Chief of Staff, Premier's Department.

Page 2 - Rises in local government rates and charges are taken into account when the pension and allowance payments rate are indexed.

June 2005 year book, page 89, 8. 74.

property rates and charges are normally set on the basis of a rating year and are priced once per year on the Eight major cities, Darwin, Canberra, Hobart, Sydney, Brisbane, etc.

The Six major cities, have the majority of the Australian population, commerce, central business districts, industry, housing etc.

Council rates for pensioner home owners are affordable and pay from \$175 to \$600 less per year than Seniors in regional centres of Queensland.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 2005.

Dennis Freun Australian Statistician.

From the September quarter 2000 onwards the total basket is divided into 11 major commodity groups. Food, Alcohol, Tobacco, clothing and footwear, Housing, Household furnishings, Supplies and services, Health, transportation communications, recreation, education and miscellaneous, these groups are in turn divided into 34 sub-groups and the subgroups into 89 expenditure classes

Summary. pensioners are forced below the C.E.C.D poverty line. A countrys poverty line is calculated on the average adult weekly wage and the poverty line should be 40% percent of the average weekly adult wage.



Please quote: MCU

COPY

Office of the Premier  
and Treasurer

9 November 2005

Mr Chris Foley MP  
Member for Maryborough  
Shop 1 Comet Place  
133 Lennox Street  
MARYBOROUGH Q 4650

Dear Chris

Thank you for your letter of 2 September 2005 on behalf of Mr Peter McSpadden concerning the maximum rate of concession payable under the Queensland Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme. I have been requested to reply to you on the Premier's behalf.

The Premier referred this matter to the Honourable Warren Pitt MP, Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors for his consideration and advice.

As you may be aware, the Queensland Government provides a rate subsidy to resident holders of a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card or a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card through the Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme. The subsidy is equivalent to 20% of the gross rates and charges levied by a local government, up to a maximum of \$180 per annum. I note the information provided by Mr McSpadden concerning concessions on council rates and charges in South Australia and Victoria for comparison with the Queensland subsidy.

In addition to the Queensland Government funded Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme, many local governments provide an additional remission to pensioner ratepayers under the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act). Local governments are able to establish the eligibility criteria for their schemes, and have the discretionary power to determine the rate of remission offered.

Councils have the flexibility to find the most appropriate approach to rating, taking into account local factors and circumstances. The Act provides local governments with a wide range of tools to lessen the impact of increased valuations on rates. An increase in unimproved land valuation does not automatically mean an increase in the amount of rates levied by a council. A decision on level of rates is one for individual local governments and the State Government does not have the power to direct any council as to how it should set and levy its rates.

.../2

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Pension rates are regularly adjusted and are increased in line with movements in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in March and September of each year. Rises in local government rates and charges are taken into account when the pension and allowance payment rates are indexed.

Expenditure for the Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme has increased from \$27.13 million in 1992-1993 to \$42.334 million in 2004-2005. This expenditure has grown significantly due to increases in the number of Queenslanders who receive pensions. There are approximately 247,000 pensioner households in receipt of the subsidy.

The provision of concessions to pensioners, seniors and veterans is a major commitment for the Queensland Government with in excess of \$430 million expended for this purpose annually. In addition to the rate subsidy, the range of concessions includes ambulance, public transport, car and boat registration, electricity and a variety of health services. The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that these entitlements to pensioners and seniors are sustainable over the coming decades.

While the Queensland Government is mindful of the significance that concessions provide to people on fixed low incomes, an increase in the maximum level of the subsidy is not possible at this time. Please be assured that this issue will continue to be monitored in the context of ongoing budget reviews.

If Mr McSpadden requires any further information or assistance in relation to this matter, he may contact Mr Derman Roughead, Manager, Concessions Unit, Department of Communities on (07) 3247 9125 who will be happy to assist him.

The Premier trusts this information is of assistance to you in responding to Mr McSpadden.

Again, thank you for bringing the concerns of your constituent to the Premier's attention.

Yours sincerely



Rob Whiddon  
Chief of Staff

Elton.

Please read articles by other Senior Pensioner home owners.

Example only, Maryborough pensioners. 2005

Rates increased 5.4%	= \$96.00
Water utility charge	= \$100.00
Water consumption at 84 cents per 1000 litres	= \$140.00
<u>total increase for pensioners</u>	<u>\$336.00</u>

Pensioner increase for same year 2005  
1.3% percent

A married couple each would receive \$6.00 per fortnight (combined \$12.00), or \$24.00 combined per month.

A single aged pensioner, \$6.00 per week, per month = \$24.00 x 6 months = \$144.00

Local government rates and charges exceed that of the aged pensioners increase for that period, Pensioners increase are calculated only of the previous 6 months, or a catch up with the costs of living.

The Local Government Association of Queensland has also released an independent analysis of price movements for State Councils showing costs rose by 5.4% in the last year as opposed to the National CPI increase of 2.6%.

The "basket of goods" used to determine the CPI is not particularly meaningful to Council.

Queensland State Government subsidy introduced in 1981 and subject to a cap of \$120.00

- The cap was increased incrementally \$140, \$160 and finally \$180 in 1992.

In all due respects, the youngest recipient aged 65 years, the oldest 90 years in 1981, are they still in receipt of the State government subsidy. It is quite obvious that the Queensland State Government calculates the life span or life expectancy of Seniors over the age of 65 years.

This comes under age discrimination Act 2004  
15 = indirect discrimination.

(A)

(B)

(C)

Above comments to QLD, ALP Senator John Hogg  
Premier of Queensland Peter Beattie  
Federal Attorney General  
Mr Kevin Rudd MP.

**ATTENTION CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OFFICER / COMMUNITY CLERK**

**For Information**

Circular #: 2005-047

# CIRCULAR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
ASSOCIATION  
OF QUEENSLAND INC.



## Council Cost Index 2005 - 5.4 percent increase

The Association has released an independent analysis of price movements for Queensland Councils that shows Councils costs rose by 5.4 percent in the last year.

A report by LGAQ Consultant Alan Morton has shown that the Council Cost Index has risen by 5.4 percent as opposed to the National CPI increase of 2.6 percent.

This report updates work undertaken by LGAQ in 2004 in relation to the potential impact of price movements on rates. The data on price movements has been obtained from ABS statistics for the period from December 2003 to December 2004.

While the CPI increased by 2.6% over this period, a number of other price indexes increased at a greater rate. Many of these indexes are more relevant to local government cost structures than CPI.

Indexes of potential relevance include: -

Index	Increase Dec. 03 to Dec. 04
CPI	2.6%
Freight	4.6%
Wages	3.6%
General construction industry	8.3%
Road and Bridge Construction	4.1%
Non Residential Building Construction	11.7%
Housing construction	5.6%

Source: ABS Catalogues 6401.0, 6345.0 and 6427.0

When the basket of goods provided by local government is examined, a relatively high proportion (around 50%) relates to general construction activity (eg roads, bridges, water supplies, sewerage systems).

Assuming that engineering work activities (representing 50% of outlays) are driven by the general construction index while the balance of activities are driven by CPI, results in a cost increase for local government as a whole in Queensland in the past twelve months of around **5.4%**.

Over the past two years (December 2002 to December 2004), the general construction index has increased by some 16.1% compared with a CPI increase of 5.0%.

While the mix of construction and non-construction activity varies from council to council, it is apparent that costs for local government have again increased at a rate significantly higher than the CPI over the last twelve months.

For further information, contact **Greg Hallam, Executive Director** on telephone 3000 2222 ([greg\\_hallam@lgaq.asn.au](mailto:greg_hallam@lgaq.asn.au))

**Circular Authorised by:**  
**Greg Hallam PSM**  
**Executive Director**

## Part 3—Concept of age discrimination

### 14 Discrimination on the ground of age—direct discrimination

For the purposes of this Act, a person (the *discriminator*) *discriminates* against another person (the *aggrieved person*) on the ground of the age of the aggrieved person if:

- (a) the discriminator treats or proposes to treat the aggrieved person less favourably than, in circumstances that are the same or are not materially different, the discriminator treats or would treat a person of a different age; and
- (b) the discriminator does so because of:
  - (i) the age of the aggrieved person; or
  - (ii) a characteristic that appertains generally to persons of the age of the aggrieved person; or
  - (iii) a characteristic that is generally imputed to persons of the age of the aggrieved person.

### 15 Discrimination on the ground of age—indirect discrimination

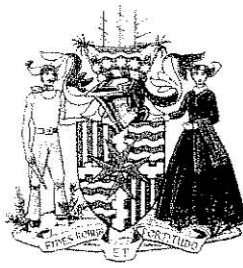
- (1) For the purposes of this Act, a person (the *discriminator*) *discriminates* against another person (the *aggrieved person*) on the ground of the age of the aggrieved person if:
  - (a) the discriminator imposes, or proposes to impose, a condition, requirement or practice; and
  - (b) the condition, requirement or practice is not reasonable in the circumstances; and
  - (c) the condition, requirement or practice has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging persons of the same age as the aggrieved person.
- (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), the burden of proving that the condition, requirement or practice is reasonable in the circumstances lies on the discriminator.

**16 Act done because of age and for other reason**

If an act is done for 2 or more reasons, then, for the purposes of this Act, the act is taken to be done for the reason of the age of a person only if:

- (a) one of the reasons is the age of the person; and
- (b) that reason is the dominant reason for doing the act.





Councillor's Office, Maryborough City Council, Administration Building,  
431-433 Kent Street, Maryborough, Q. 4650. (P.O. Box 110)

Mr P. McSpadden

Dear Peter

Thank you for your recent letter. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the answers are as follows: -

1. Item 2 *The State Government subsidy introduced in 1981 and subject to a cap of \$120.00 – what year was the cap increased to \$180.00?*

- The cap was increased incrementally \$140; \$160; and finally \$180 in 1992.

2. *The political party that introduced the first remission in 1981 and the political party that increased the remission to \$180.00?*

- The National Party under Sir Joh Bjelke Petersen was in power in 1981 and Labor under Wayne Goss in 1992.

3. *Newsletter: March 2003 Re: Financial figures (Pensioner Remission) The total council remission 2001-2002, \$573,264.00. Are these figures taken only from the 20% pensioner remission, or combined with the council 15% discount if paid within the 30 days of notice given?*

- These figures are taken from a publication of the Dpt. Local Government and Planning. The figure quoted is the dollar amount paid by council in pensioner remissions for that period.

Yours sincerely

*Barb Hovard*

Barbara Hovard  
12 June 2003

Barbara Hovard B. Bus  
Councillor – Division 4  
20 Katherine Street Maryborough Q 4650  
Phone 41231048 Facsimile 41236125 Email bhovard@iprimus.com.au

# Maryborough rates up an average 5.4%

THE AVERAGE Maryborough ratepayer will pay a net increase of about \$90 or 5.4% in rates to finance the council's 2005-2006 projects.

Mayor Barbara Hovard said more than \$16 million would be spent on capital works, including more than \$2 million on streets, roads and bridges.

Key spending includes:

- \$940,000 towards marketing, promotion and events (including \$150,000 for southern entrance statement);
- \$400,000 for a new entrance wall and landscaping on the Hervey Bay approach;
- New public pontoon (no allocation given);
- About \$880,000 for a new rowers' building, Scouts building and skindivers' set-up;
- More than \$2 million for the completion of the Mary River parklands;
- Almost \$680,000 will be spent on city parks, including \$149,000 for walk and cycle paths;
- About \$120,000 to improve disability access and upgrade camping facilities at



Laryngitis strikes: Maryborough deputy mayor Julie Arthur with the budget papers the council adopted yesterday. Mayor Barbara Hovard has severe laryngitis. Photo: GARRY WILLIAMSON 05m1394

- Maryborough Showgrounds;
- Granville transfer station, \$150,000;
- Design of a new animal care facility, \$30,000;
- New toilet block at Anzac Park and completion of Queens Park toilets (no amount given);
- About \$1.9 million to buy

- land and development;
- Cemetery improvements, \$100,000;
- Broлга Theatre operational costs \$380,000;
- Aquatic Water Park concept plan;
- Water trunk and reticulation mains, more than \$1.4 million;

- Pump stations and sewerage treatment plant improvements, \$455,000;
- Gatehouse roadworks at Salt Water Creek Road refuse disposal site;
- Development initiatives, \$125,000;
- Maryborough Social Plan, \$20,000.

## Budget to help kickstart city

THE MARYBOROUGH City Council budget aimed to foster the wonderful feeling of vibrancy and expectation about the city, mayor Barbara Hovard said yesterday.

Momentum was building from major marketing and promotional initiatives, including a new city image and this year's budget aimed to foster that energy, growth and vibrancy.

Ms Hovard was speaking of a net increase of 5.4% in the 2005-2006 budget adopted yesterday.

Rates, she said, had been affected by new valuations since last year's budget.

Valuation in urban areas had risen between 66% and 185%, with the average up by 130%.

"Some property owners will have a rates increase that exceeds this average," she warned. "Some would have a lower increase or a reduction from the previous year."

It had been extremely difficult to bring forward a budget which allowed for a reasonable increase in rates but still provided enough funds to maintain services and take on new capital works.



## Council's new rating categories detailed

A NEW rating category for commercial and industrial land is detailed in budget papers councillors adopted.

The mayor, Barbara Hovard, was absent due to severe laryngitis which has confined her to bed.

Instead, deputy mayor Julie Arthur read the mayor's prepared statement to councillors.

All reports on this page quoting the mayor are from statements prepared before the laryngitis struck.

The differential rates adopted are:

- Fraser Island and Great Sandy Strait islands: Minimum rate \$630, 72c in the dollar;
- Coastal rate: (a) Minimum \$630 at 85c in the dollar, valuation \$120,000 or

less; (b) Minimum \$1020 at 68c in the dollar, valuation \$120,001 or greater;

● Rural rate: (a) Minimum \$630, rate 79c in the dollar, valuation \$120,000 or less; (b) Minimum \$948, rate 63c in the dollar, valuation \$120,001 or greater;

● Rural residential: (1) Minimum \$630, 1.375c in the dollar, \$120,000 or less; (b) \$1650, 1.10c in the dollar, \$120,001 or greater;

● Urban: (a) Minimum \$630, 1.40c in the dollar, valuation \$120,000 or less; (b) Minimum \$1680, 1.12c in the dollar, \$120,001 or greater;

● Commercial/industrial (city centre): \$630, 1.97c in the dollar; commercial/industrial (other), Minimum \$630, 1.40c in the dollar.

## \$100 water utility charge

THIRST for water will cost Maryborough ratepayers \$100 under a Water Utility Infrastructure charge adopted yesterday.

"The water situation is critical," mayor Barbara Hovard said.

"Water is a precious and limited resource that is being put under increasing pressure.

"It is essential we take steps to guarantee the city has a reliable and quality water supply now and in the future."

The first project under the new scheme would be an upgrade of water services to Granville, including an extension of the water main across the river from Woodstock

of Council's observations  
approved by the Minister for Senior  
Citizens' Affairs

11 March 2003

Ct. Barbara Howard

Dear Barbara,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 March 2003.

Your comments on items 1 - 5 have been noted, however, further explanation is required on the following:

1. **Item 2.** The State Government subsidy introduced in 1981 and subject to a cap of \$120.00, when was the cap increased to \$180.00?
2. **Item 5.** I am not concerned about discount rates offered by other councils for early settlement. I am, nevertheless, very concerned over the manner in which discounts are calculated for pensioners who pay rates. A recent article in The Fraser Coast Chronicle showed how pensioners were being over charged. In my case I find I am losing \$26.00 per ½ year or \$52.00 per annum because remissions are deducted before the 15% discount is applied.

I refer you to pages 10, 12 and 21 of the Information Booklet 2002-03 it is quite clearly illustrated that components of all rates, except the Fire Levy, are subject to a 15% early settlement discount. Why is Council discriminating against pensioners who can least afford this type of exploitation? Have you considered what 30% of the basic wage represents when 3% is removed from the "promised 15%"?

This letter has been copied to the Ratepayers & Residents Association of Maryborough (RRAM) and I request you to copy your response to RRAM.

Yours sincerely,

Peter McSpadden

Cc  
RRAM

## Letters to

### Wide Bay Water

In reference to the Wide Bay Water advertisements whose apparent aim is to sell the benefits of Corporatisation of our water and sewerage services. I would like to draw people's attention to some figures quoted. It is claimed using Council's Financial Advisor report that Wide Bay Water in its first year of operation as a Corporatised Organisation would have a dividend of \$22 million which common sense dictates could be used to pay off the recently announced transfer of \$22 million debt from the Hervey Bay City Council to the Wide Bay Water.

It is claimed in the advertisement by Wide Bay Water that this transfer of \$22 million debt would halve the Council's debt and to reduce interest payments by \$4 million each year.

From this device it may be deducted that the ratepayers have been carrying an annual \$8 million interest bill, which would amount to a high proportion of the revenue collected from the ratepayers each year.

Could it be that through this manoeuvre of Corporatisation the Councils inherited high level of debt, an opportunity would arise for the Council to borrow further finance for upgrading of roads as promised in the Councillors Elections Platform.

TH Smith  
Craigish

### Can water pay

IN ITS first year of operation as a corporation WBW has increased the price of water and the fixed charge by 7% even though we were given assurances that 4% was the limit.

It is important to note that after five years of operating as a commercial business WBW is still making a loss on its water sales. This was made

## YOUR SAY

### Water costs too much

LAST week on television a spokesman who was interviewed maintained that residents of Hervey Bay were paying too much for water.

In support of this spokesman, I submit the following statistics obtained from Bundaberg, Maryborough and Hervey Bay councils.

Fixed rate annual charge: Hervey Bay \$166.40; Bundaberg \$293.00; Maryborough \$335.00.

Actual consumption of water: Hervey Bay 85c per kl for all water used; Bundaberg 66c per kl for any consumption in excess of 600kl (600kl free); Maryborough no charge for any consumption.

On this basis, residents of Bundaberg and Maryborough pay nothing for usage up to and including 600kl.

Residents of Hervey Bay who use 600kl would pay \$510 for the privilege.

After taking annual fixed charges into con-

sideration, Hervey Bay residents would pay (if they used 600kl) \$363 more than residents of Bundaberg and \$341 more than residents of Maryborough in a 12-month period.

Why are Hervey Bay residents being "ripped off" and paying too much for their water?  
— JACK THOMPSON,  
Helsham St, Hervey Bay.

water meters and no charges can be justified?

Our rates have already paid for the water storage, treatment and reticulation system. It belongs to the ratepayers.

Why therefore is it necessary for ratepayers to buy water meters and have to pay for their own water resources in the future when they have already paid for them over past decades?

In private industry the shareholders (owners) would sack the board and management. When is the next council election?  
— JOHN WILLIS, Maryborough.

clear by Tim Waldron when he stated that full cost recovery was not yet a reality but would be fully implemented over a 10-year period (FCC 10-4-03).

In the meantime the price for WBW services and water has gone up significantly.

In 1997-98 water was 70 cents per 1000 litres. The fixed water charge was \$140 a year and the fixed sewerage rate was \$140.

This year the price for 1000 litres of water is 94 cents. The fixed water rate is \$185.10 and the sewerage rate a staggering \$417.95.

Yet, with full cost recovery still many years away, it would be interesting to know how WBW can pay out dividends, service debt in excess of \$40 million and sponsor major social events. Clearly, if water is sold below cost there can be no profit.

Here is a job and a challenge for the new deputy mayor. — H. PFALLER,  
Seaview Drive, Booral.

### Price of water dear

JACK Thompson's letter (Observer April 20), alleges that townwater

users are being "ripped off".

I would like to make the following additional comments:

The council has recently attempted to explain that it is complying with a government directive to implement "full cost pricing".

This policy has, it seems, led to the adoption of a ten year financial plan which "... shows no more than 4% annual increase in water charges for the 10 year period."

However, an examination of water charges for the last three years shows that this is not true. In the first year, 1998/9, the fixed charge went from \$140 to \$153 and the price of water per 1000 litres went from 70 cents to 78 cents.

It is interesting in this context to look at the cost of water to council. A recent report to council, dated October 25, 2000, by a senior officer and approved the CEO WBW states that the cost of water to council is 42 cents per 1000 litres.

However, it is important to note that the price of water charged to the consumer this year is 85 cents per 1000 litres and set to rise by at least 4% annually for the next seven years.

Clearly, the price of water in Hervey Bay is driven by relentless greed and unbridled avarice and has nothing to do with any desire to comply with the government directive to introduce "full cost pricing". — H. PFALLER,  
ER, Seaview Dve,  
Booral.



# Harris denies Tiaro lacks compassion

By Jan Rolston

TIARO resident Lynette Leask says Tiaro Shire Council lacks compassion.

"My rates have increased from \$660 last year to \$1300 this year. That's an increase of nearly \$700. As a single-income family where do we find that money in four weeks' time?" she said.

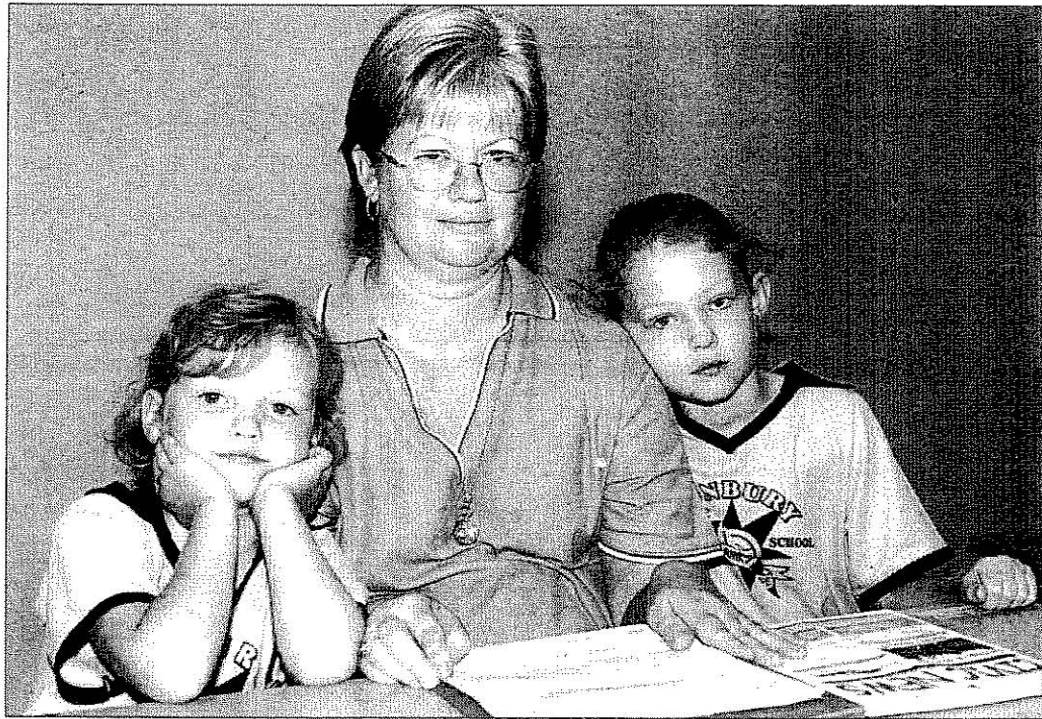
If Mrs Leask does not pay by today she could have another \$120 to pay by December 2 and if she does not pay then the outstanding amount could accrue compounding interest at 11%, although the council has said it would discuss payment options with ratepayers having difficulty paying.

Mrs Leask said in March when the valuations came out she received notices from Tiaro council and the Department of Natural Resources saying the fact that her property valuation had doubled did not necessarily mean her rates would go up.

A notice from DNR said: "If your valuation has changed it does not necessarily mean that the council rates you pay will also change. Rates are determined by your council according to what services it intends to provide you with and how much revenue it needs to raise to pay for those services."

Under the heading "Myths" a Tiaro council newsletter said: "An increase in property value increases the rates by a similar percentage." Yet Mrs Leask's rates doubled in line with her property value.

Mrs Leask said she was



Lynette Leask, above with her daughters Ryleigh and Tylar, says Tiaro's rates increases have hit some single income families hard, including hers.

Photo: VALERIE HORTON 05m1928

mised. "If I had been told in March that I would have such a huge increase I would have been ready to pay it now," she said.

Mrs Leask does not want to ask her bank for a loan and is not keen to hand over personal financial details to the council.

"Who is going to suffer coming up to Christmas? The children. This is a rural community so I would have expected the council to have more compassion than that. With all that is going on with Tiaro council we seem to be caught up in a political soap opera."

Linda Harris: contact council if in difficulties paying rates.



Tiaro mayor Linda Harris said the council had made it clear to residents to contact the council if they had difficulty paying to avoid awkward situations and the council had provided information on the differential rating system and how the rates had been determined. The mayor

also sent a personal explanatory letter to each ratepayer.

Mrs Harris said Tiaro's rates still compared favourably with those in neighbouring shires.

"We have been known for a long time as one of the lowest rating shires," she said.

"We are not the highest rating shire in the region and we are trying to be pro-active about development within the shire."

There were a number of factors influencing the increase in rates in some areas, including cost shifting by the state government, she said.

## ■ Hervey Bay Budget

# Rates cut for some but most to pay more

By Ernie Paussa

hredit@frasercoastchronicle.com.au

RATES should go down for about 2500 Hervey Bay homeowners in this year's budget.

The reduction has come about through the council cutting its general rate from 1.832c in the dollar last year to 1.707c in the dollar in 2003-04.

The council will not lose money, however, collecting an additional \$2 million in rates revenue on top of the \$22m it received last year.

The extra \$2m will come from the 20,000-odd homeowners whose rates will go up because of increases in the valuations of their properties.

They will pay an average 4.2%, or about \$73.74, a year more, said Hervey Bay mayor Ted Sorensen when he unveiled the budget details yesterday.

Ratepayers whose properties have increased substantially in value will be protected by a 15% cap on rate increases.

The council has also adopted a rates deferral plan for eligible pensioners.

Charges to rise include a 5.4% increase for garbage collection, 4% in the sewerage

## Plans needed for ageing now

A SNAPSHOT of the Fraser Coast in 2021 shows more than one in four people will be more than 65 years of age.

The district will have the largest percentage of aged people over any other statistical division in the state.

If that is the case, major initiatives must be started to ensure the ageing population can still live in relative comfort, according to Lola Baldwin, the vice-president of the Fraser Coast branch of the National Seniors Association.

Commenting on the state government's discussion paper on Queensland in 2020, she said the selection criteria to access support facilities must be relaxed to ensure all aged people could live in their own homes while they were still able.

"There are a number of existing support agencies such as Meals on Wheels, transport and associated health care that are available but not to everyone," she said.

"If the aged population on the Fraser Coast is going to become

one in four then those people will expect to be able to ask for and receive help, whereas today many can't.

"This is due in part to the fact that existing support networks are fully booked and they don't have the staff to help newcomers.

"The government and the councils must plan to provide more respite care facilities, retirement villages that have both independent living and high care units which will encourage our residents to stay on the Fraser Coast."

charge, and 7.5% in the fixed water charge.

Water usage charges will remain static at 94c a kilolitre.

About \$12m will be spent in the next financial year on capital works.

Among the big-ticket items are \$2.5m to \$2.8m on the Nikenbah waste transfer station, \$5m on the extension of

the Burgowan water treatment plant and \$6.5m for roads, including an unspecified amount for the start of the reconstruction of Main Street from Boat Harbour Drive to Booral Road.

Deputy mayor Belinda McNeven said, pleasingly, the council had been able to freeze new borrowings in the current

year and was looking at increasing its debt by just \$4m next year, taking overall borrowings to about \$60m.

Executive manager corporate services Phil Harding said the council was looking to be in surplus by 2007-08 and would probably not have to borrow any more money after then.

# Councils slam Beattie 'lies'

By DARYL PASSMORE  
and AINSLEY PAVEY

LOCAL councils have accused Premier Peter Beattie and his deputy Anna Bligh of lying to deflect responsibility for huge water price hikes facing households.

"These guys would make the Nazi propaganda machine blush," said Greg Hallam, executive director of the Local Government Association of Queensland.

Under recommendations from the Water Commission, bills are expected to more than double over the next five years to pay for water grid infrastructure costing more than \$7 billion.

Without State Government subsidies, the average water bill in Brisbane will rise from \$355 to \$847 by 2012.

Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman and his Logan counterpart Graham Able say the price hikes will hurt low-income earners and could force some companies out of business.

Mr Beattie blames greedy councils for failing to re-invest profits from water charges for years.



**TURN OFF:** Beach showers dry up April 10

He said councils had made \$1 billion profit from water charges over the past three years. Checking progress on a water recycling plant at Bundamba yesterday, Mr Beattie said the State Government had been forced to move in to solve the water crisis problem last year.

"We are the bunnies," he said.

The Government bases its \$1 billion figure on a Treasury analysis of water services revenue in councils' annual reports.

But Mr Hallam said Mr Beattie and Ms Bligh were misleading the public to let councils bear the brunt of ratepayer anger over escalating charges.

"They work on the premise that the bigger the fib the better," Mr Hallam said.

An analysis of council-owned water businesses by consultants KPMG in August found the dividend paid to councils in 2005-06 was \$83.3 million.

"If you extrapolate that over three years,

## Surfers told to use a bucket

GOLD Coast Mayor Ron Clarke has a solution for surfers frustrated by his decision to turn off beach showers next month: bring a bucket of water from home. "I think it's a small sacrifice," Cr Clarke said.

Despite the Gold Coast's Hinze Dam being 75 per cent full, the city will introduce Level 5 water restrictions on April 10, including the shutdown of beach showers.

The council last turned off beach showers in 2002, triggering a public outcry.

—PAUL WESTON

you get a quarter of a billion dollars, not a billion," Mr Hallam said.

Ms Bligh told *The Sunday Mail* she stood by the Treasury figures.

Queensland has requested \$408 million from the Federal Government's National Water Fund.

Ms Bligh has asked Treasury to review the proposed water charges. The local government association wants a program capping household water bills in small towns at \$500 expanded to urban centres.

## No right

ACCORDING to Queensland Hansard there are 89 elected Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Out of that number there are 83 party politicians who appear to debate and vote as instructed and six parliamentarians who debate and vote with an open mind.

A parliamentarian is elected to give the Australian people, no matter in which state they choose to live, what the people ask for, under the Australian Constitution.

A party politician will give only what the party thinks that the people ought to have. Probably it would be much better for all us Australians if these private membership political clubs (parties) were officially made to obey the Constitution according to its content.

The parties have no constitutional right of existence. Each financial member (elected) should resign from his/her private club (party), or resign his/her seat. - BILL MANNING, Maryborough.

# cuts council debt by \$17m

COST cutting by the Hervey Bay City Council has shaved \$17million from its budget cutting the city's debt to \$57 million.

Hervey Bay councillor Paul Hefferan said claims by the Hervey Bay Ratepayers' Association that the council debt was \$74 million were untrue.

"The debt as at June 30, 2003, will be \$57 million," he said.

"The budget for 2002/2003 was passed with the combined debt for the council and Wide Bay Water Corporation proposed to become \$74 million by June 30, 2003," he said.

"I voted against the 2002/2003 budget because of the proposed increased debt of \$17 million (up from \$57 million to \$74 million) and the size of the rate increases introduced last year.

"Council decided to re-assess its budget in early 2003 because the Department of Local Government requested council justify its financial position before it would let the council borrow more money.

"With a change in council attitude and some good work by executive officers, a cost saving program began



Paul Hefferan ... cost-saving program began earlier this year.

in early 2003. This reduction in costs and expenditure is the best thing I have seen happen in my six years on council.

"It is now estimated that, as at June 30, 2003, we will probably have a total city debt of about \$60 million, instead of the \$74 million proposed in the budget.

"The budget for 2003/2004 is currently being developed. Once again I certainly will not be voting for any increase in debt and will be working towards an outcome that reduces debt.

"The exception being that the cost associated with securing extra water for the city must always remain a wild card."

## Plans needed for ageing now

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If that is the case, major initiatives must be started to ensure the ageing population can still live in relative comfort, according to Lola Baldwin, the vice-president of the Fraser Coast branch of the National Seniors Association.

Commenting on the state government's discussion paper on Queensland in 2020, she said the selection criteria to access support facilities must be relaxed to ensure all aged people could live in their own homes while they were still able.

"There are a number of existing support agencies such as Meals on Wheels, transporters associated health care that are available but not to everyone," she said.

"If the aged population on the Fraser Coast is going to become

one in four then those people will expect to be able to ask for and receive help, whereas today many can't.

"This is due in part to the fact that existing support networks are fully booked and they don't have the staff to help newcomers.

"The government and the councils must plan to provide more respite care facilities, retirement villages, that have both independent living and high care units which will encourage our residents to stay on the Fraser Coast."



## Form judgments

I INTEND to run a positive campaign to become mayor.

However there are times things must be identified for the public record.

I refer to the feature 2004 Council Election (FCC 13-2-04). Mayor Sorensen claims one of the highlights of his term is cutting the city's debt.

The total council debt at March 2000 (last election) was \$39.5 million.

The total council debt June 2000 was \$41.7 million.

The total council debt February 2004 is \$51.0 million.

Cr Sorensen successfully voted for an extra borrowings of \$7 million in the 2002/2003 budget. I voted against this proposal.

The state government department later rejected the 10-year financial plan including the \$7 million proposed borrowings.

The council's approved capital roads budget in 2002/2003 was underspent by \$4 million (ie more than one-third of the budget).

Council's approved capital roads budget in 2003/2004 may also be under spent by a further \$4 million (i.e. an under expenditure of \$8 million in road capital expenditure in a two-year period).

This is now helping to reduce debt.

The road work has not been done because the council administration has not had the inter-

nal capacity to undertake the works and we are told that outside design contractors are too busy to do council work.

It is now a bit rich to report the mayor is claiming a reduction in debt as a highlight of his term.

There was a strategic/planning meeting held four years ago. The mayor did not attend.

It was at this meeting that the councillors decided to focus on the development of the foreshore beautification.

A lot of people have contributed. The mayor should be acknowledged in the credits among others.

To quote the paper: "It was his (the mayor's) thrust to beautify the foreshore and entrance to city that made them (the visit-

ing baby boomers) stay."

Form your own judgments.

This election is about leadership. - PAUL HEFFERAN, mayoral candidate, Watson

## Opportunity

INQUIRIES have revealed that the council will call tenders next month for the next stage of water meter installation.

It is a golden opportunity to keep a huge slice of our water meter tax in Maryborough. One councillor rightly says that the project might be too big for one firm but that local plumbers could form a consortium for the tender.

An interesting problem will be the continued employment of meter readers and, I assume, an accounts executive. Then there will be queries about readings to add to the workload.

It's obvious that the cost of these wages and meters are the reasons for our levy excess. What happens when the meter levy ceases? There are only three possible income sources: (a) a rates rise (b) anticipated additional income from water usage (c) a brilliant idea or two to boost council income without penalising ratepayers.

In the meantime I urge local plumbers to move quickly on a consortium for the tender. - COL KNIGHT, Ferry St. Maryborough.

## Rates debate

REGARDING John A Neve (FCC 18-6-03) "Hervey Bay council proposing to allow the elderly and those on fixed incomes to defray their rates against the equity they have in their houses", the following is an extract from the ordinary minutes #10 11-6-03:

"Councillor Clark said she would like to know how many people would fall into this category, what would be the possible cost to council and from where

the additional level of service come because others would have to pay to enable council to offer this level of service."

Far from "not understanding or scaremongering" Mr Neve, I would suggest any responsible councillor should have asked the questions I did before supporting such a motion or putting such a motion.

MOVED (Hefferan/Campbell) that:

1. Ratepayers be entitled to apply for rates assistance, the assistance to take the form of council allowing residents leniency in regard to outstanding rates by allowing payment at a later date or when their property is eventually sold.

2. The outstanding rates would attract an interest of 2% above council's borrowing rate.

3. The criteria for a ratepayer to be eligible would be that they were over 65 years of age, they had been living in the same premises more than 10 years, the unimproved land value would need to be greater than the average value of Hervey Bay City residential land and any mortgages on the property would need to be no greater than 40% of the valuation. - JENNY CLARK, councillor, Hervey Bay City Council.

The disparity between the benefits offered by the Southern Labor States counterparts is extreme which verifies the need for a complete overhaul on levels of concessions applicable to Seniors and pensioners in regional Queensland.

offset and Medicare Levy thresholds. Line accurate and up to date. ■

## WA seniors concessions

The Western Australian (WA) Government has introduced new and extended concessions for WA seniors. These changes extend concessions already available to Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) holders to other indicated Seniors Card holders.

The new concessions, effective from 1 July 2001, are:

- a 50% rebate or deferral on local government rates and Water Corporation annual charges for seniors who hold both a WA Seniors Card (WASC) and a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC);

- a 25% capped rebate on local government rates and Water Corporation annual charges for holders of a WA Seniors Card only;
- a pro-rata rebate for seniors and pensioners who become eligible during the rating year and who owned and occupied their property at 1 July of the rating year;
- a free driver's licence and a 50% concession

on one vehicle licence fee for seniors who hold both a WASC and a CSHC; and

- an electricity subsidy for the cost associated with operating an air conditioner in areas supplied by Western Power that are north of the 26th Parallel or north of the 50 Day Relative Strain Index for holders of a WASC and either a PCC or a CSHC. This is a new concession for PCC and other indicated card-holders.

It is important that WA seniors check their eligibility for these concessions and register with administering agencies, as the concessions will only apply from the date of registration. For more information, call the WA Seniors Telephone Information Service on 1800 671 233.

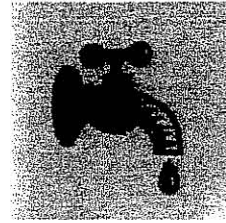
If you want to know more about state and territory Seniors Cards or concessions available, please contact the relevant department, agency or authority in your state or territory. ■



- CONCESSIONS
- PUBLICATIONS
- GUIDELINES
- OTHER LANGUAGES
- CONTACT US
- FEEDBACK

## Concessions

This page provides details of concessions related to municipal rates, water, sewerage, Life support machines, and Stamp Duty on your home.



### List of Abbreviation

Concessions on Rate, Water and Property			
Concession	Description	Eligibility	Contact
Municipal Rates* *	50 per cent off council rates, up to a maximum of \$160.00 in 2004/05.  Note: The capped maximum is indexed annually in line with inflation.	PCC  Gold Card - War Widow  Gold Card - TPI	Contact your local council to have the concession automa deducted.
Water and Sewerage Concessions * #	50 % off water and sewerage service charges and volume charges, up to a maximum of: -\$144 in 2004/05 -\$150 in 2005/06 and then indexed annually in line with inflation.  Note: Customers billed for a single service, e.g., water only, receive 50% off water charges, up to a maximum of: -\$72 in 2004/05 -\$75 in 2005/06 then indexed	- PCC  - HCC (except Child Disability and Foster Care)  - Gold Card (except Dependants)	Contact your water supplier to have th concession automa deducted, or prese your card when pat your bill.

	annually in line with inflation.		
<b>Carted and Non-Mains Water Rebate*</b>	A flat annual rebate for those who spend at least \$120 each financial year on buying non-mains water, tank water and cartage costs.	PCC HCC (except Child Disability, Foster Care) Gold Card (except Dependant)	Contact the Concessions Unit on (03) 9613 5122 or 1800 133 014 for more information and an application form.
<b>Life Support Machines*</b>	Concession on the water usage charge associated with the operation of haemodialysis machines. The discount is equivalent to the cost of 168 kilolitres of water per annum.	PCC HCC (except Child Disability, Foster Care) Gold Card (except Dependant)	Application forms available from your water supplier or the hospital supplying the haemodialysis machine.  For more information contact your water supplier or the Concessions Unit on 9613 5122.
<b>Smart Homes Program*</b>	Assists concession households in financial hardship with the replacement costs of inefficient or defective fixtures that are causing high water bills e.g. leaky taps, inefficient shower heads, insufficient lighting.  <i>Note: Assistance is only available if the relevant water agency or energy retailer participates in the program.</i>	PCC HCC (except Child Disability, Foster Care) Gold Card (except Dependant)	Contact the Concessions Unit on 9613 5158 or 1800 658 521 for more information and to find out if the water agency or energy retailer participates in the Program.
	The scheme provides up to \$500 to eligible cardholder for assessing, repairing, maintaining and	Holder of a PCC	

	properties with a value of more than \$250,000 but not more than \$350,000)	Gold Card (except Dependant)	<a href="http://www.sro.vic.gov.au">www.sro.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>Stamp Duty* Exemption for first home buyers</b>	Exemption from stamp duty for first home buyers with dependant children on purchase of property up to a value of \$200,000.	First home buyers with dependant children	For an application i contact the State Revenue Office on 2161, or visit <a href="http://www.sro.vic.gov.au">www.sro.vic.gov.au</a>

\* A concession can only be claimed where the liable person is the cardholder. This usually means that the title of the property or the tenancy agreement or the water bill is in the cardholder's name. Minors with a Disability HCC or Foster Care HCC are not eligible for these concessions.

# Rural water authorities charge a Waterways Management Charge. There is no concession available on this charge.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CD - Child Disability Allowance

CSHC - Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

DR - Drought Relief Payment

DVA - Department of Veterans' Affairs

FA - Family Allowance

FO - Foster Care Payment

HCC - Health Care Card

LI - Low Income

MO - Mobility Allowance

NS - Newstart Allowance

PA - Partner Allowance

PCC - Pensioner Concession Card

PP - Parenting Payment



SECTION A. GUIDE TO SA STATE AND COMMONWEALTH CONCESSIONS

CONCESSIONS AVAILABLE

Key

✓ Concession may be available  
 No concession available

60+ Only those aged sixty years or more  
 (1)-(8) See specific note in Section B  
 Proof of eligibility required:

- A - Health Care Card;
- B - Pension Concession Card;
- C - Repatriation Gold Health Card (DVA);
- D - State Seniors Card;
- E - State Concession Card;
- F - Commonwealth Seniors Health Card;
- G - Transport Concession Card;
- H - Income Tested (annual income);
- J - Student Card (photo ID).

COMMONWEALTH ALLOWEES

	- Property Based -					- Other -									
	COUNCIL RATES	EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY	LAND TAX	SAVE THE RIVER MURRAY LEVY	WATER & SEWERAGE RATES	DOG REGISTRATION	EDUCATION	ELECTRICITY	FUNERAL ASSISTANCE	HEALTH CARE	LEGAL ADVICE	PRESCRIPTIONS	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	TELEPHONE	TRANSPORT SA
Austudy / Abstudy	✓A(1)	✓A	✓A	✓A(4)	✓A(4)		✓A		✓	✓A		✓A	✓J(8)		
Commonwealth Development Employment Project	✓A(1)	✓A	✓A	✓A(4)	✓A(4)			✓A(7)	✓	✓A		✓A	✓G		
Farm Assistance	✓A(1) or B(2)	✓A or B	✓A	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(7)	✓	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓G or B		
New Enterprise Incentive Scheme	✓A(1)	✓A	✓A	✓A(4)	✓A(4)			✓A(7)	✓	✓A		✓A	✓G		
Newstart Allowance	✓A(1) or B(2)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(7) or B(7)	✓	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓G or B	✓A(60+) or B	✓A(60+) or B
Parenting Payment - Partnered	✓A(1) or B(2)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(7) or B(7)	✓	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓G or B	✓A(60+) or B	✓A(60+) or B
Partner Allowance	✓A(1) or B(2)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(7) or B(7)	✓	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓G or B	✓A(60+) or B	✓A(60+) or B
Sickness Allowance	✓A(1) or B(2)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(7) or B(7)	✓	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓G or B	✓A(60+) or B	✓A(60+) or B
Special Benefit	✓A(1) or B(2)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(7) or B(7)	✓	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓G or B	✓A(60+) or B	✓A(60+) or B
Widow Allowance	✓A(1) or B(2)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(7) or B(7)	✓	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓G or B	✓A(60+) or B	✓A(60+) or B
Youth Allowance (unemployed)	✓A(1)	✓A	✓A	✓A(4)	✓A(4)	✓A	✓A	✓A(7)	✓	✓A		✓A	✓G		

COMMONWEALTH PENSIONERS

Age Pension / Age Blind Pension	✓B(2)	✓B	✓B	✓B(5)	✓B(5)	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B
Carer Payment	✓B(2)	✓B	✓B	✓B(5)	✓B(5)	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B
Children Widow Pension	✓B(2)	✓B	✓B	✓B(5)	✓B(5)	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B
Disability Support Pension	✓B(2)	✓B	✓B	✓B(5)	✓B(5)	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B
Mature Age Allowance	✓A(1) or B(2)	✓A or B	✓B	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A(4) or B(5)	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A(7) or B(7)	✓	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B	✓A or B
Parenting Payment - Single	✓B(2)	✓B	✓B	✓B(5)	✓B(5)	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B
Service Pension	✓B(2)	✓B	✓B	✓B(5)	✓B(5)	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B
War Widow: EDATPI Pension (Gold Card)	✓C(2)	✓C	✓C	✓C(5)	✓C(5)	✓C	✓C	✓C	✓	✓C	✓C	✓C	✓C	✓C	✓C
War Widow Pension	✓B(2)	✓B	✓B	✓B(5)	✓B(5)	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B

SELF-FUNDED RETIREES (Not in receipt of one of the Commonwealth benefits listed above)

Self Funded Retirees	✓D(3)	✓D(6)						✓F				✓F	✓D	✓F	
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OTHERS

State Concession Card holder	✓E(2)	✓E	✓E	✓E(5)	✓E(5)	✓E	✓E	✓E	✓	✓E	✓E	✓E	✓E	✓E	✓E
New Zealand/British War Widow Pension	✓B(2)	✓B	✓B	✓B(5)	✓B(5)	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B	✓B
Low Income Earners (Income tested)	✓H(1)			✓H(4)	✓H(4)	✓H	✓H	✓H	✓	✓H	✓H	✓H	✓H	✓H	✓H

## SECTION B. CONCESSIONS INFORMATION

### COUNCIL RATES

- (1) Up to 60% to a maximum of \$190 pa concession for principal place of residence. Apply for concession at Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) -- see Section C for contact details.
- (2) Up to 60% to a maximum of \$190 pa concession for principal place of residence. Apply for concession at SA Water -- refer Section C for contact details. Application forms are available at SA Water, Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) and Council offices.
- (3) Up to 60% to a maximum of \$100 pa concession for principal place of residence. Either the applicant or spouse / partner must be the holder of the State Seniors Card -- see Section D for details of concession card eligibility. If a couple applies, at least one must be a cardholder and the other non-cardholder must be in less than 20 hours paid employment per week. Apply for concession at RevenueSA -- refer Section C for contact details.

### DOG REGISTRATION

Councils provide a dog registration concession to Pension cardholders and Health Care cardholders (including Low Income Concession cardholders). For further information please contact the relevant Council where the dog resides -- refer to the White Pages for contact details.

### EDUCATION

Reduced education fees may be available for recipients of some Commonwealth benefits. Contact your school, TAFE, WEA or University for more information.

### ELECTRICITY

Maximum concession of \$120 pa (conditions apply). All applicants can apply via any Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) office. Pensioners and holders of the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card can also apply via their electricity retailer. Applicants must not be sharing house with a person who has an income of more than \$3,000 pa unless that person is a spouse, partner or dependant or is in receipt of a Centrelink/DVA pension or allowance.

- (7) Commonwealth Allowees must have a spouse, partner or dependant living with them to be eligible. See Section C for Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) contact details.

### LAND TAX

Where the owner is not a recipient of a principal place of residence exemption, a concession may be available of up to 60% of the tax payable to a maximum of \$150. To be entitled to this concession, the owner must be in receipt of a Commonwealth Pension or Commonwealth Allowance and the property must be their principal place of residence. Apply for the concession at SA Water where a Pension applies or at RevenueSA where an Allowance applies. Contact RevenueSA for more information (See Section C).

### EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

Up to \$40 pa concession for principal place of residence. Apply for concession at Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) -- refer Section C for contact details.

- (6) Either the applicant or spouse / partner must be the holder of the State Seniors Card -- see Section D for details of concession card eligibility. If a couple applies, at least one must be a cardholder and the other non-cardholder must be in less than 20 hours paid employment per week.

### FUNERAL ASSISTANCE

There are two types of funeral assistance available -- either, a full contract funeral assistance where the funeral has not yet been contracted to a private funeral director, or a grant when a funeral has already been contracted with a private funeral director. To be eligible, the deceased and immediate family members must be in receipt of Centrelink/DVA Income. Contact Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) for more information (See Section C).

### HEALTH CARE

Dental Care, Eye Care, Hearing Services, Ambulance Cover, Patient Transport. Contact your local Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) office for further assistance (See Section C).

© RevenueSA

### LEGAL ADVICE

Reduced legal rates for pensioners and allowees available through the Law Society of South Australia on (08) 8229 0222.

### PRESCRIPTION MEDICINES

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is available to the following cardholders:

- Health Care Card;
- Pensioner Concession Card;
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

The scheme allows for concessional rates on prescription medications (specifically included in the PBS scheme). Under the scheme, medications cost \$3.70. If total spending in a calendar year reaches \$192.40, all PBS medications are free for remainder of that year.

*Note: For details regarding concession cards - refer Section D for details. For further information on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) contact the Information Line 1800 020 613.*

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Reduced concessional fares (50%) for persons holding a Pensioner Concession Card, State Seniors Card, DVA Gold Card (TPLEDA or War Widow), Incapacitated Ex-Service Personnel Travel Concession Card, State Concession Card, Transport Concession Card issued by Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS), or Full-time Student Identification Card. Refer Section D for more information regarding concession cards.

- (8) Reduced student fares available to students in receipt of Ausstudy/Abstudy. Full time tertiary students travel at 50% fares whilst full time secondary students travel at 33% of adult regular fares.

### SAVE THE RIVER MURRAY LEVY

Ratepayers who are eligible for a concession on SA Water rates and charges will be exempt from the Save the River Murray Levy. Exemption is granted when water and sewer rate concessions are granted.

### TELEPHONE ALLOWANCE

A rebate of \$19.20 per quarter on phone line rental may be available to holders of Pensioner Concession Cards or Commonwealth Seniors Health Cards. Refer Section D for more information regarding concession cards. Contact Centrelink to arrange your telephone rebate.

### TRANSPORT SA

50% reduction on motor vehicle registration fees (one per cardholder) and drivers licence fees. Full exemption of payment of \$60 annual stamp duty. Also, greater concessions for incapacitated ex-service persons. Refer Section C for contact details.

### WATER AND SEWERAGE RATES

\* From 1/7/04, receive a maximum of \$47.50 concession per quarter (total of \$190.00 pa) on water and sewerage rates, or \$95 on water rates and \$95 pa on sewer rates.

- (4) Apply for concession at Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS).
  - (5) Apply for concession through SA Water. Applications are available at SA Water, Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) & Council offices. See Section C for contact details.
- ANY OTHER ASSISTANCE**  
Contact your local Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) office. Refer Section C for contact details.

## SECTION C. CONTACT DETAILS

### CENTRELINK

Enquiries: 13 23 00 Website: [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

### CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES (CYFS)

General enquiries: Refer to the White Pages or website for your nearest Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) office. Written enquiries to GPO Box 292, Adelaide SA 5001. Website: [www.dfc.sa.gov.au/cyfs/financial](http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/cyfs/financial)



cont, page 1

F/ Rate increases not to exceed the National C.P.I. for pensioners.

G/ The \$180 State Government Subsidy to remain at present level.

H/ The 20 percent discount by council also to remain at present level.

This will ensure the pensioner will no longer be forced below the poverty line by the incompetence and mismanagement by councils excessive debts,

These debts are paid for by all ratepayers including pensioners.



Kevin Rudd MP  
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr Peter McSpadden

29 June 2007

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter regarding the pension and the ever increasing cost of living. I appreciate you writing to me with your feedback and suggestions.

I understand how difficult it is these days making ends meet as a pensioner. There have been significant increases in the cost of living in recent years, particularly in essentials such as fruit, vegetables and petrol. Not to mention basics around the home like phone and electricity bills.

Many pensioners, and others on fixed incomes, were particularly disadvantaged by the Howard Government's GST introduced in 2000. Labor understands that this tax hits pensioners particularly hard.

In recognition of the cost of living pressures faced by pensioners, Labor has initiated a Senate Inquiry into these pressures, their impact on pensioners, and the adequacy of current pension and tax arrangements. I encourage you to make a submission to this Inquiry.

Labor has always been strong supporters of pensions for those Australians who need this support, and we understand that the pension needs to keep up to date with everyday costs. At our recent National Conference, Labor endorsed the following as a key part of our policy platform:

*Labor remains committed to providing adequate income support for those who need it. Labor will:*

- *maintain the benchmark of maximum single adult rates of pension to at least 25 per cent of male total average weekly earnings;*

- *ensure basic rates are indexed at least twice a year in line with movements in the Consumer Price Index; and*
- *ensure that those whose only income is provided through the social security system will not have to pay income tax.*

These core principles underpin our commitment to the pension, and we will have more to say in the lead up to the coming election.

The recent Federal Budget contained a special one-off payment for age pensioners and some self funded retirees. Labor supports this extra payment, and in the Parliament we helped to get it paid as quickly as possible. But we also know that the Government could be doing more to provide better on-going support for pensioners.

Once again I hope you take the opportunity to express your views on the age pension to the Senate Inquiry.

The Senate inquiry into the cost of living for older Australians is taking public submissions until 20 July. You can make submissions to the Standing Committee on Community Affairs by writing to:

Elton Humphery  
Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

By phone: 02 6277 3515

By fax: 02 6277 5829

By email: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)


Kind regards,



**Kevin Rudd**  
**Federal Labor Leader**  
**Member for Griffith**

# History of Pensions and Benefits

Ever wondered who introduced the pension and the other social security concessions? Listed below are the governments which have led the way in implementing policies that protect the standard of living for older Australians and the disadvantaged.

<p><b>1909</b> <b>Fisher ALP Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Old Age Pension</li> <li>■ Invalid Pension</li> <li>■ Maternity Allowance</li> </ul>	<p>Provisions of the Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act were implemented—providing for the first national old age and invalid pension payment. Maternity Allowance was introduced to reduce infant mortality.</p>
<p><b>1943</b> <b>Curtin ALP Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Funeral benefits</li> <li>■ Widow Pension</li> <li>■ Unemployment benefits</li> <li>■ Pharmaceutical benefits</li> <li>■ Housing assistance</li> </ul>	<p>A national social security system, to assist grieving families, and widow unemployment benefits and health initiatives were introduced. The first Commonwealth-State housing agreement was signed.</p>
<p> <b>1972</b> <b>Whitlam ALP Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Benchmarking pensions to average earnings</li> <li>■ National health insurance—Medibank</li> </ul>	<p>The Whitlam Government proposed and achieved a benchmark where the pension <u>should not fall below 25 percent of male average weekly earnings</u>. The Government also introduced the first national health insurance scheme.</p>
<p><b>1983</b> <b>Hawke ALP Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Medicare</li> <li>■ Carers Pension</li> <li>■ Home &amp; Community Care Program (HACC)</li> <li>■ Pharmaceutical Allowance</li> <li>■ Additional Family Allowance</li> <li>■ Faster pension indexation</li> </ul>	<p>Medicare was introduced to provide comprehensive health coverage for pensioners and retirees. To assist older Australians who wished to stay at home, HACC, and a carer pension were introduced. To assist with medicine costs a fortnightly Pharmaceutical Allowance was introduced. Pension increases were permanently brought forward 12 weeks—the shortest period ever between the publication of the CPI and pension increases.</p>
<p><b>1993</b> <b>Keating ALP Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Earnings Credit Scheme</li> </ul>	<p>A system was introduced where pensioners could earn extra income without losing pension payments.</p>

14 October 2005

Mr Peter McSpadden

Dear Mr McSpadden

Thank you for your recent visit to my office regarding pensioner concessions for local council rates.

For your information pensioner rate concessions are the responsibility of State and Local Governments and are not an area over which I have any jurisdiction as a Federal Member of Parliament.

However, you may be interested to know that for many years the Queensland Government has provided a subsidy equal to 20% (up to a maximum of \$180 each year) of the gross rates and charges levied by a Local Council to holders of a Queensland Pensioner Concession Card issued by Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. This concession is only available to property owners where it is their principal place of residence. Some Councils also offer additional concessions to pensioners funded from their own resources. All of these concessions are administered by your local Council and you would need to apply to the Maryborough City Council to receive the relevant subsidies.

\* Council rates and charges have been rising at almost <sup>TRIPLED</sup> double the rate of other cost increases over recent years. There has however been no increase in the maximum rate of State Government Pensioner Subsidy for many years. You may wish to again raise with your State Member, Mr Foley, about the need for the State Government to update its Pensioner Rate Remissions to keep abreast of the rate rises over the years.

\* The Australian Government provides financial assistance direct to Australian Local Councils to assist them to meet their obligations to the community. This funding is increased every year and now totals more than \$1.1 billion. Councils are free to spend this money as they see fit and can use the money to provide specific pensioner rate subsidies. Councils also receive about \$500 million a year from the Australian Government to help fund local road needs.

\* In addition, you would be aware that Australian Government pensions and income support payments are increased regularly to take account of Consumer Price Index (CPI) increases. The age pension is indexed in March and September each year to ensure it keeps in line with increases to the cost of living. Rate rises and other cost increases are taken into account in the setting of the CPI. In addition, the Federal Coalition Government has legislated to require the maximum single pension rate to also be at least 25% of Male Total Average Weekly Earnings. This requirement ensures pensioners are not left behind as a result of increased living standards being achieved across the community through higher wages.

18 November 2005

Mr Peter McSpadden

Dear Mr McSpadden

Thank you for your recent letter in response to my earlier correspondence regarding pensioner concessions for local council rates.

I can understand your frustration and disappointment that the Queensland Government has not indicated its willingness to increase the level of subsidy for rates to pensioners and I have noted the comparisons in your letter with pensioner rebates in other States.

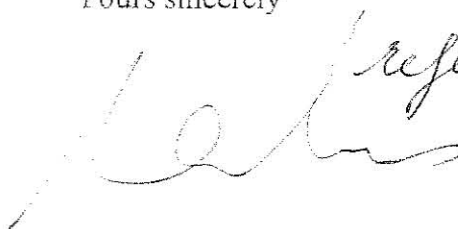
You have suggested that the Federal Government legislate so that the subsidies for pensioners are uniform across the nation. While the Australian Government provides financial assistance direct to the State Governments and Local Councils to assist them to meet their obligations to the community, the Constitution does not allow the Commonwealth to pass specific legislation pertaining to pensioner rate concessions. In addition, even if the Commonwealth did have the power, it would obviously be unfair for one Government to pass laws which required another Government to make payments to a specific group in the community.

I would urge you to continue pursuing this issue with the State Government.

However, if an appropriate opportunity arises for me to highlight this issue, I will certainly do so.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me again about this issue.

Yours sincerely

 refer to the Australian  
Constitution

Peter A. Chespadden  
10 Carlinga St  
Maryborough 4650 (Qld)

Elton Humphrey  
Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Department of the Senate

Dear Elton

I have been advised by Mr Kevin Rudd  
MP Leader of the Opposition, to make submissions  
into the Senate inquiry into the cost of living for  
older Australians.

I will be more than grateful and would appreciate  
your time, if you would give every consideration  
to the contents of my correspondence and if possible  
draw up a summary to the Senate inquiry.

### Submissions

Many older Australians paid a 7% percent pension  
tax back in the 50's 60's, and early 70's, this  
was to ensure an aged pension of 60% percent  
of the average weekly male wage.

Removed by the Federal Coalition government.

Pensioners income 2007, are fixed and capped  
at the present level.

A married couple each receive 15% percent of the  
average weekly male wage (A, W, M, W) combined  
30%.

Single aged pension, 25% percent of the (A, W, M, W).

The O.E.C.D States that a countrys poverty line is calculated  
on the average A, W, M, W, and that the poverty line should be  
40% percent of the average adult wage.

Cont/

The increase to the new level of 5 percent will benefit all Seniors and aged pensioners.

A greater responsibility to be taken by both the State and Local governments on concessions remissions, to be determine by the Senate inquiry under the Australian Constitution, removing the stigma and discrimination of the elderly citizens home owners.

The 50 percent concession on all councils services and charges in line with Southern counterparts.

The one off payment also to continue, this I can honestly say thank you it has pulled us out of our present level of poverty.

The above suggestions, -remissions to the Senate inquiry will greatly enhance the pensioners Standard of living to the O.K. e.D.

\* One further request on behalf of the Prime Minister the Hon John Howard, The Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd, Shadow Treasurer Wayne Swan MP. Please supply 1 ex government computer and printer to my home address, Broadband?

Many Thanks for your Julie  
Kindest Regards  
Peter et al & Spadden

PS do not forget my computer.



Mr Kevin Rudd MP, Leader of the Opposition, to maintain the benchmark of a maximum single adult rates of pension to at least 25 percent of male total average weekly earnings.

The above was introduced in 1972 by the Whitlam ATP Government, that was 35 years ago.

The USS Aircraft Carrier Kitty Hawk is only 11 years older and is being scrapped and so should the benchmark of 25 percent of the male total average weekly earnings.

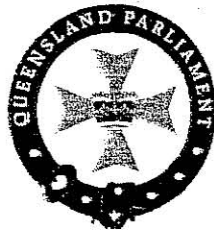
The provision of a better deal for pensioners and seniors is a matter of high priority. It is imperative that new initiatives be developed to assist our senior citizens and pensioners to remain in their own homes with a sense of dignity and freedom.

Submission.

Single aged pensions to be increased by 5 percent to 30 percent of the male total average weekly earnings.

For each of a married couple to be increased by 2.05 percent to 17.05 percent, combined 35 percent of the male total average weekly earnings.

Shop 1 Comet Place  
133 Lennox Street  
Maryborough Qld 4650  
Phone: (07) 4122 2277  
Fax: (07) 4122 1980  
Email:  
maryborough@parliament.qld.gov.au



MR CHRIS FOLEY MP  
STATE MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

14 November 2005

Mr Peter McSpadden

Dear Peter

A reply has been received from the Office of the Premier in response to representation made to him again about the Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme.

The reply is attached for your information. You will see from the response that the Queensland Government are unable to increase the subsidy at this time but have assured that the issue will continue to be monitored in the context of ongoing budget reviews.

The Premier's Chief of Staff has also supplied contact details should you require further information or assistance in relation to this matter.

From my point of view, I will continue to bring this matter before Parliament from time to time as I know many pensioners are doing it tough at present.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Chris Foley", written over a faint circular stamp.

Mr Chris Foley MP  
State Member for Maryborough

encl.

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**MR CHRIS FOLEY MP**  
**STATE MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

---

*The following question was tabled at Queensland Parliament by Chris Foley MP, State Member for Maryborough, on Wednesday 10 August 2005. In accordance with the Sessional Orders, an answer is required from the relevant Minister by Friday 9 September 2005.*

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**1113 MR FOLEY** asked the Minister for Environmental, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle) -

With reference to the State Government which introduced a pensioner rate subsidy in 1981 subject to a cap of \$120 which was subsequently increased to \$180, but it has not been raised since 1992-

Why has this subsidy not been raised to at least keep pace with inflation and what plans does the Government have to redress this unfair situation?

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Why has this subsidy not been raised to at least keep pace with inflation and what plans does the Government have to redress this unfair situation?

**ANSWER:**

There are two principal sources of concession for pensioner ratepayers – the State Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme (PRSS) administered by the Concessions Unit, Department of Communities; and additional pensioner rate remissions (under the *Local Government Act 1993*) that are made available by many local governments. The level of any remission or concession provided by a local government is entirely at its discretion.

The State PRSS expenditure has increased from \$27.13 million in 1992-1993 to \$41.788 million in 2003-2004. This expenditure has grown significantly due to increases in the number of Queenslanders who receive pensions. There are approximately 244,000 pensioner households in receipt of the subsidy.

Pension rates are regularly adjusted and are increased in line with movements in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in March and September of each year. Rises in local government rates and charges are taken into account when the pension and allowance payment rates are indexed.

The provision of concessions to pensioners, seniors and veterans is a major commitment for the Queensland Government with in excess of \$430 million expended annually. In addition to the rate subsidy, the range of concessions includes ambulance, public transport, car and boat registration, electricity and a variety of health services. The Government is committed to ensuring these entitlements to pensioners and seniors are sustainable over the coming decades.

While the Government is mindful of the significance concessions provide to people on fixed low incomes, an increase in the maximum level of the subsidy is not possible at this time. This issue will continue to be monitored in the context of ongoing budget reviews.

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**MR CHRIS FOLEY MP**  
**STATE MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

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*The following question was tabled at Queensland Parliament by Chris Foley MP, State Member for Maryborough, on Tuesday 9 August 2005. In accordance with the Sessional Orders, an answer is required from the relevant Minister by Thursday 8 September 2005.*

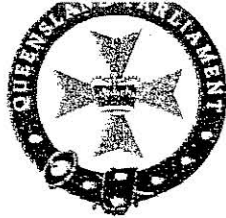
**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**1059 MR FOLEY** asked the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle) -

With reference to the West Australian Government which in 2001 brought in concessions for pensioners being a 50 per cent rebate on local government rates and a 50 per cent rebate on water corporation annual charges for pensioners-

Will the State Government consider similar rebates for Queenslanders?

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**MR CHRIS FOLEY MP**  
**STATE MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

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Will the State Government consider similar rebates for Queenslanders?

**ANSWER:**

There are two principal sources of concession for pensioner ratepayers in Queensland - the State Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme (PRSS) administered by the Concession Unit, Department of Communities; and additional pensioner rate remissions (under the *Local Government Act 1993*) that are made available by many local governments. The level of any remission or concession provided by a local government is entirely at its discretion.

The provision of concessions to pensioners, seniors and veterans is a major commitment for the Queensland Government with in excess of \$430 million expended annually. In addition to the rate subsidy, the range of concessions includes ambulance, public transport, car and boat registration, electricity and a variety of health services.

While the Queensland Government is mindful of the significance that concessions provide to people on fixed low incomes, an increase in the level of the subsidy is not possible at this time. This issue will continue to be monitored in the context of ongoing budget reviews.



Excessive Local Government annual rate increases, Services and charges.

Aged pensioners home owners, on a low fixed income and financial hardships, can apply to councils for leniency in regards to outstanding rates, by allowing payments at a later date or when property is Sold or both pensioners are deceased, at 11% percent per annum, interest on interest.

Socialist government act 1993 (Sorry)  
Local government act 1993, gives councils power to secure rate debt against properties. Councils can also take possession of items such as cars and sell them to recover rates. After a while unpaid rates went to debt collectors. They can also seize houses.

Democracy I call it Barstardisation.

The freedom of right for Seniors, aged pensioners to remain in their own homes as long as possible with dignity and with out fear

cc to Kevin Rudd mp

Chris Foley mp

John Hogg ALP Senator

State ALP ministers.

# IS poverty now a two-way street?

It was refreshing to read (FCC 15-06-07) that Paul Neville's "official" figures quoted in "What poverty?" weren't in fact official.

However, I am still confused.

If I read Paul correctly an unemployed single person and an aged single person have different levels of poverty.

How is this so?

Do they eat less, pay less rent, wear fewer clothes?

H. Howard (FCC 14-06-07), talked of pensioners "slow starvation". Maybe this is the answer.

I personally believe anyone not receiving \$352.16 net a week is living in poverty.

I also believe rather than a \$500, one off handout, the federal government should have raised the aged pension from 25% of adult average full-time salaries, to 27%. This is what it was in 1975.

We are after all, only as wealthy as our poorest neighbour. - JOHN A NEVE, Torquay.

## A hoodwink

Regarding the letters from Cy d'Oliveira (FCC 11-06-07) and Paul Neville (FCC 02-06-07), according to National Ageing Research Institute director Professor Allan McLean, single living-alone pensioners paying commercial rents or living in their own homes cannot afford to eat properly.

He has received support from the NSW Combined Pensioners' and Superannuants' Association and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

CPSA general manager Megan

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters to the Editor to: PO Box 217, Hervey Bay, 4655.

Fax: (07) 4120 1050

Email: [mbedit@frasercoastchronicle.com.au](mailto:mbedit@frasercoastchronicle.com.au)

Lee said the single age pension did not provide a sufficient buffer against unexpected bills.

She said the problem was greatest for those in their 80s who had been living on tight pensioner budgets for more than 15 years and were suddenly facing the cost of necessary house modifications and ever-increasing medical bills.

One reason is because regular CPI pension increases do not compensate for the real rise in living costs of older people on low incomes.

The St Vincent de Paul Society's John Wicks, a retired economist, describes the CPI as the "biggest hoodwink perpetuated on the public".

Mr Wicks said items holding the CPI inflation figures down tended to be of a luxury nature (cars, jewellery, overseas holidays) - which low-income people could not afford - while the rising cost of essentials exceeded average inflation.

This appalling neglect of single pensioners is a sheer disgrace.

I note that Mr Neville states

that with rent assistance, the weekly pension is about \$307 (without rent assistance it is about \$262).

Well, no one can get a decent rental under about \$150 a week, which would leave the pensioner only about \$157 a week for everything else. - P. ROBB, Maryborough.

## Slippery situation

Several months ago I made a complaint to the centre management a local shopping centre regarding the slippery yellow lines around the car parking area.

I had quite a bad fall. On Tues-

# Pay rise insulting to pensioners

Over the past three years our politicians have enjoyed six tax cuts, equating to more than a year's pension for old-age pensioners.

Now, ironically, a remunerations tribunal has increased the base rate of politician salaries by 4.2% on top of a recent 2.5%, totalling 6.7% this year.

For the life of me, I cannot see the logic in giving our politicians such a bountiful handout when the base rate for pensioners has been kept at 25% of average wages for the last 10 years.

Tax cuts do not have any value or gain for pensioners. In fact, by holding down wage/salary increases, they hold down pensions.

Pensioners still have to pay GST at a time of little, if any, pension increase.

This pay rise for politicians is not just immoral but downright insulting to pensioners, struggling with high energy, rent and food prices due to petrol costs. - CY D'OLIVEIRA, Hervey Bay.

## It's clear where centre should be

Re L. Gallagher's letter "Make Bay centre of our amalgamated universe" (FCC 18-6-07): Maryborough does not finish at the city centre.

We residents in the coastal villages are 60km to 80km from Hervey Bay and it is not worth the trouble, time or cost to access any of the claimed facilities, especially when most necessities are

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters to the Editor to: PO Box 217, Hervey Bay, 4655.

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Email: mbedit@frasercoastchronicle.com.au

available in Maryborough.

Tiaro is in the same situation.

I have passed a top hospital in Maryborough, only 28km from home, and been taken to the Bay three times in the past two years. This means my wife and friends have been faced with the risky 120km drive along the "goat track" in order to visit me.

A similar situation will occur for many people if the administration centre is in the Bay.

I suggest that Mr Gallagher draws two 50km circles on a map, using each town as a centre point. He will soon see where the administration centre should be. - JOHN HACKETT, Boonooroo.

## They'll charge us

At long last I now understand the term "Come in spinner". I now read our federal government is to "add \$358 million to existing programs", currently \$600 million, to give us broadband.

But haven't we just sold Telstra? Weren't we told private enterprise was better and cheaper as a result of competition?

## Pension too low

THE OECD states that a country's poverty line is calculated on the average adult wage a week and that poverty line should be 40% of average adult male wage.

What is true here in Australia is that the basis of the old-age pension has been set by parliament to be only 25% of average adult male wage.

What kind of a message does that give to pensioners who built this country? \$12.50 does not even allow a pensioner to keep level with food and fruit prices, as rents, petrol and other expenses have nearly doubled in cost. - CY D'OLIVEIRA, Torquay.

If there is a dollar to be made in broadband why aren't Telstra and Optus providing it?

Having received nearly \$1 billion dollars of taxpayers' money, they'll charge us to use our system. - JOHN A. NEVE, Torquay.

## Govt needs to show more even-handed application

Having watched the presentation of the budget and the reply by Mr Rudd, it was noticeable that the government members were unable to give the respect to Mr Rudd's speech that was afforded the treasurer. I believe it shows the degree of arrogance this government has accumulated over its time in office.

It would do the party good to gain some humility and show a more even-handed application to policy instead of governing for mainly the business end of the population. As much as we need business, so does business need the people.

I wonder how long it will be before Mr Howard and friends use money not spent in this budget to implement some of the policies mentioned by Mr Rudd? They now seem bereft of ideas.

As for how the budget affected us, naturally as pensioners we are grateful for the one-off



Government members were unable to show respect to Mr Rudd's speech.

payment but know well that the future is going to be hard and more expensive.

Maybe it would have been more appropriate to give age pensioners a more beneficial and worthwhile fortnightly raise to bring the rate above the poverty line rather than a one-off payment which, as I said, is appreciated but for some it will not last long and won't solve hardship the rest of the year. - B. SMITH, Urangan.

# Live now, pay your rates later

by Kevin Corcoran

edit@frasercoastchronicle.com.au

ELDERLY Hervey Bay residents might be able to book their rates up against the value of their property. Councillor Paul Hefferan said some sort of rate assistance was needed following a huge increase in land valuations.

"The council has not yet determined what its rates will be for the next year," Mr Hefferan said.

"We realise there is a lot of insecurity, especially by the elderly, at their rates are going to increase," he said.

"There are going to be cases where people will not be able to meet their rates bill without help from family or the council or they will have to move out of their house."

Council rates are based on the value of unimproved land.

This year the value of unimproved land in Hervey Bay rose an average of 13.5% while houses on the Esplanade jumped between 30% and 50%.

## Count blessings

THE Maryborough council budget has produced some complaints about rates increases.

Looking in from the outside Maryborough seems to be a well managed city when compared to Hervey Bay.

Last year, for instance, our council prepared a budget which was knocked back by the state government. Yet, only one councillor (Hefferan) had the guts to speak out against it.

The minimum rate has shot up from \$410 to \$580 or more than 40%, in the past two years. When one considers that over 50% of Bay residents and ratepayers earn an income of less than \$200 per week, one might well come to the conclusion that our council officers and councillors are a bunch of people with distinct sociopathic tendencies.

The ratepayers of Maryborough should count their blessings. - H. PFALLER, Seaview Dr, Booral.

## Rates debate

REGARDING John A Neve (FCC 18-6-03) "Hervey Bay council proposing to allow the elderly and those on fixed incomes to defray their rates against the equity they have in their houses", the following is an extract from the ordinary minutes #10 11-6-03:

"Councillor Clark said she would like to know how many people would fall into this category, what would be the possible cost to council and from where

the additional level of service come because others would have to pay to enable council to offer this level of service."

Far from "not understanding or scaremongering" Mr Neve, I would suggest any responsible councillor should have asked the questions I did before supporting such a motion or putting such a motion.

MOVED (Hefferan/Campbell) that:

1. Ratepayers be entitled to apply for rates assistance, the assistance to take the form of council allowing residents leniency in regard to outstanding rates by allowing payment at a later date or when their property is eventually sold.

2. The outstanding rates would attract an interest of 2% above council's borrowing rate.

3. The criteria for a ratepayer to be eligible would be that they were over 65 years of age, they had been living in the same premises more than 10 years, the unimproved land value would need to be greater than the average value of Hervey Bay City residential land and any mortgages on the property would need to be no greater than 40% of the valuation. - JENNY CLARK, councillor, Hervey Bay City Council.

## Rates must be paid - time to pay costs mo

### ● From Page 1

The value is set by the state government and is based on land sales in the past year.

Esplanade residents from Hervey Bay, Toogoom and Burrum Heads have started a campaign to have a differential rates system introduced. They argue that they could be paying up to seven times more in rates than residents who lived only one street back from the Esplanade.

Ratepayer groups said that the increase would force the elderly, especially those on fixed incomes, from their homes.

Mr Hefferan said the rates policy aimed to show that the council had a soul and would provide a safety net for those who could not pay their rates bill.

It was designed to allow them extra time to pay, but not stop paying their bill, he said.

Under the proposal residents would be given leniency on outstanding rates by allowing payment at a later date or when the property was sold.

The outstanding rates would

attract interest of 2% above council's borrowing rate.

The criteria for a ratepayer eligible will be that they are years of age, have been living at same address for more than 10 years and the unimproved land value would need to be greater than the average value of residential land in the Bay. Any mortgage on the property would need to be no greater than 40% of the valuation.

Mr Hefferan wants an indication into the proposed system released before the council votes on rates for the year.

The proposal drew support from all councillors, and a ward councillor Jenny Clark.

"It is all well and good to get support from these people, but we need to know how many voters would support such a service and how much it would cost the council," she said.

"It could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and some people would not pay."

Mrs Clark was concerned the council would have to cut services if there were so many unpaid

P. M. McSpadden

In reply to Rob Whiddon, Chief of Staff,  
Premiers Department.

Brief to Derran Roughead Manager Con/Unit.

It will be noticed that there is no allowance for running a vehicle in the pension increase, which in most instances is a necessity, not a luxury. Nor is any assistance given towards high petrol prices.

There is little regard by desk bound bureaucrats to-day, when calculating pensions as how local and State government charges, electricity, water rates, water consumption, telephone, private medication, general home maintenance, insurance, funeral plan, vehicle and running costs are managed, excessive local government general rates that exceeds pensioners CPI increases.

This is not to mention food or other items that is a weekly expense which has been greatly hit by GST.

If it's necessary for Bureaucrats, whose 90% taxpayers funded pension to maintain their life style.

Then surely a person who has been a constructive element with in the community throughout their working life should also be entitled to greater remissions, concessions than what is allocated now.



It must be remembered that a pension is subject to revision if any income is generated over \$76.00 per week. But these same rules do not apply to retired Bureaucrats.

How discriminatory

On behalf of the Premier The Hon, Peter Beattie and Chief of Staff Mr Rob Whidden, please forward to my home address the following.

- 1) Queensland Constitution
- 2) The Australian Constitution

Yours Sincerely  
Peter M. McSpadden.

cc to Mr Kevin Rudd MP.





Please quote: OPS/00526

30 June 2006

Mr P McSpadden

Dear Mr McSpadden

Thank you for your letter of 8 February 2006 concerning the Queensland Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme.

From your correspondence and the other material you provided, I understand you are fully aware of the scheme's benefits and the Queensland Government's position regarding the maximum level of subsidy available. I am unable to add anything further but can only reiterate that this issue will continue to be monitored in the context of ongoing budget reviews.

In relation to your other comments regarding government assistance, I wish to advise that Pensioner Concession Card, Queensland Seniors Card and some Gold Card holders are entitled to a 50% reduction on the registration fee component of the total motor vehicle registration fee payable. This represents a saving of \$101 on a four cylinder car and \$155 for a six cylinder car.

It is also important to note since August 1997, the Queensland Government has provided a fuel subsidy so that Queensland motorists and other fuel consumers receive the benefit of lower fuel prices. At the present rate, this equates to fuel prices in Queensland remaining at least 8.354 cents per litre less than interstate prices.

I am enclosing a copy of the *Concessions made easy* brochure which provides information on all the Queensland Government concession schemes. As requested, I am also enclosing a copy of the Queensland Constitution. You can access the Australian Constitution through the Commonwealth Government's website [http://www.pm.gov.au/aus\\_in\\_focus/constitution/index.html](http://www.pm.gov.au/aus_in_focus/constitution/index.html).

I trust this information is of assistance. Please contact me on 3247 9125 or 1800 460 849 freecall if you require clarification or additional information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derman Roughead'.

Derman Roughead  
Manager, Concessions Unit

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