

Eric Scott

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to the inquiry into living pressure on older Australian regarding the effect of Government policies over the past 10 years.

In this regard Government policies seem to working towards one thing, the intimidation of aged pensioners and keeping pension recipients on the lowest possible standard of living.

This began with the changing of Old Age Pensions to “income support”, which is another way of denying older people any chance of improving their living standards. The government in so intent on saving money at the expense of pensioners they even tax the small amounts I receive from the UK government, just \$300 per month. I know years ago when a person reached 70 this pension was allowed free of tax. Not now, with this greedy, grasping government.

I am extremely unhappy with the government policy that has left me in the humiliating position of being “kept” by my wife. I have spent my life as a responsible tax payer (since 1970 in Australia) who has been proud to provide for my family, now because my wife is younger than me and works as a piano teacher her salary is counted against my meagre (now just \$300 per fortnight) pension. She is in fact keeping me, a fact that goes right against the grain.

It will be a long time before she gets an aged pension, and yet I am treated as half of a pensioner couple, not even a single pensioner.

It is not as if she is a high earner either. Her earnings are low enough for her to claim a concession card.

This infuriates me, especially when the recent changes in law give extremely wealthy retirees given access to the same concessions that I get.

I am not allowed to enhance my standard of living by earning a few dollars more without losing pension, yet other pensioners will save hundreds of dollar a year with the concession card.

I feel robbed when I know the government keeps more than \$150 a fortnight from me - and there is no allowance at all for the rising cost of everything. Our income is static, can only work so many hours a week. It seems the government has decided how much we are allowed to spend each week and are determined we should spend any more

I would like to see aged pensions revert back to being pensions that are considered to be rights that have been earned by tax payers and not some sort of government hand-out, which as they constantly tell us, can be stopped at any time if we don't tell them we have earned an extra dollar.

I find this aggressive approach by the government rude and demeaning. I had a letter this week threatening to cut off my pension because I hadn't told them I earned (after agents fee, GST and income tax deducted at top rate) \$400 from a small acting job, which was part of my ABN transactions anyway.

Treat the aged pension as a non-taxable right for all older people – and I'm sure that the pensions that go to rich will cost a hell of a lot less than the concession they now get, and all the paper and time-wasting the current system wastes.

Sincerely
Eric Scott