

## **Senate Community Affairs Committee Inquiry into the cost of living pressures on older Australians**

- (a) (i). The impact of recent movements in the price of essentials, such as petrol and food:

The recent increases in price has made a huge problem for those who are depending solely on the aged pension for income support, especially for those in private rental accommodation. They are often faced with the reality of either paying the rent and going without food. I am aware of this by the number who need emergency relief to buy food. The ones hardest hit are those who have lost a spouse or partner and now must meet all costs out of a single income. Those who have suffered a health problem or serious illness are the worst off of all.

- (ii). Most are experiencing increases in the cost of household utilities because of increases in electricity prices and also increased demand because of the very cold weather.

- (ii) Those dependent solely on age pension support cannot afford dental care. If they can get into a State funded dental service – they have their teeth out because they cannot afford dental treatment.

- (b) These cost pressure often mean that the elderly suffer an ever decreasing standard of living and cannot afford to participate in the community – those who own their own homes are better off than those renting privately.

- (c) If the older Australians are caring for grandchildren, the cost of food and other services impacts greatly, especially if the grandparents have no other income than the pension. If, in their old age, grandparents have taken on the role of raising a 2<sup>nd</sup> family, they are often cut off from their own age group and ability to socialise as the needs of the grandchildren will predominate.

- (d) Those older Australians who have a superannuation based income are better off than those reliant on aged pension alone. The new tax concessions help those on superannuation as they no longer have a tax burden from their superannuation income.

The changes that have occurred over the last 10 years have enabled those on superannuation incomes to live more comfortably. Although the cost of petrol will mean many cannot afford to travel as they may have wished to do. The cost of petrol will also limit the travel they would have undertaken to visit family and friends. Trips will have to be more carefully planned