



19th July 2007

Attention: Elton Humphrey  
Committee Secretary  
Community Affairs Committee  
Parliament House

Dear Mr. Humphrey

Would you please include this letter in the papers for public submissions for the Standing Committee on Community Affairs (20/7/07).

I apologise for the handwritten copy but I cannot afford a computer or connection to the internet!

As you will be aware, the aged Pension is:

\$530.90 PER FORTNIGHT

(\$13,330.00 p.a.). I have paid taxes all my working life as well as my family and think we now deserve an increase in the pension to live on because it has become increasingly difficult to pay bills and EAT. Thank goodness it has recently rained & the grass is growing so we can have a feed of grass!  
(This is not a joke!!)

(2)

As I do not know what the terms of reference are for your Committee it is difficult to know what to include but I do know that the single aged Pension has to be itemised on all bills and put against the capacity of this \$530.90 per fortnight to pay for them as well as EAT!

RATES: \$1,028.22 pa

438.00 Discount

\$590.22 (paid in 3 monthly

(NB Please see attached clipping on rate rise soon)

instalments but is very difficult)

MORTGAGE: I am fortunate not to have one because I couldn't imagine where the money would come from.

HOUSE INSURANCE } \$478.41 pa even with  
HOUSE CONTENTS } discounts from NRMA.

ELECTRICITY:

WATER:

GAS:

PETROL:

Even with discounts which are very small it is still difficult

If required I can provide all this information to the Committee

(still high even with discounts & careful management of trips to shops.)

and the last item has to be FOOD. This always is put last because we have to keep up with paying our bills and it is always the one which has to be paired down & down! (No matter how carefully we shop).

### HEALTH:

Doctor charges \$50— per consultation (does not ~~but~~ bill even though I have a Pensioner Concession Card from Centrelink) & not many doctors do.

DENTAL: I urgently need dental treatment but have had to wait & wait because private dentists charge very highly even for a filling (& to get an approx.) NB I have been on the waiting list for ACT GOVT. Dental Health Svs. but still waiting! and waiting and waiting!

I really think that the committee needs to sit down and look very closely to each item and then try to pay them all out of the amount; and I will be very interested how the formula is worked out & hopefully to our benefit for morale & health & well-being — we deserve it.

(4)

URGENT ATTENTION and consideration by the Committee is also included — (1) & (2).

① I know of a pensioner who takes her very sick husband THREE TIMES A WEEK for three hourly visits per day for dialysis treatment. They have to use their own car and petrol to go from Dalmeny to Moruya Hospital. They are ineligible for reimbursement for petrol etc., WHY?! These large costs also have to be paid out of the pension!

② Also, I know of another pensioner (there are many others) who go to bed at 7pm each night to save on heating & electricity costs in winter.

I hope that my letter is of use to your Committee & I look forward to getting a copy of the papers & especially to see what the outcome will be. Please, please consider very carefully as we are hurting out here & feel quite demoralised by our struggle financially.

Thank you for your consideration

JOAN CORDEAU x

ATTACHMENT: (1)

# Rate rise can't be justified: Mulcahy

By Sonya Neufeld  
Business Reporter

The latest increase in rates will see ACT residents fork out about \$150 extra this year, hitting low-income households the hardest, shadow treasurer Richard Mulcahy says.

Mr Mulcahy said yesterday that figures by the ACT Government revealed that residents would pay, on average, an extra \$145 this year on top of the "initial slug" of at least \$287 last year.

He said given the current state that a number of ACT services were in, it was hard to tell what the extra money was going towards.

"The hospitals are still in a mess with long waiting times for elective surgery, schools have been closed and ... Canberra's appearance, particularly in older suburbs, has deteriorated unabated," Mr Mulcahy said. "We are paying more but getting, at best, the same services and in reality, a standard of services in key areas that does not meet our expectations."

But while ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope agreed any increase in costs would have a greater effect on low-income earners, he said it came down to \$3 extra a week going towards vital community services.

He said since Labor was elected there were now 126 more hospital beds, increases to funding for elective surgery and child protection, and about 120 more police on the streets. "Most householders would understand that incomings have to pay for outgoings," Mr Stanhope said.

He called on Mr Mulcahy to tell Canberrans which services he proposed to cut, "so that he can return \$3 a week into their household budgets".

"There is no doubt that there are Canberra families who are hurting financially," Mr Stanhope said. "But by far the biggest share of the increased impost on households in recent times has been brought about by interest rate rises.

"The last three of these have added about \$200 a month to the bills of mortgages and none of that money goes to provide essential services such as schools, hospitals and police."