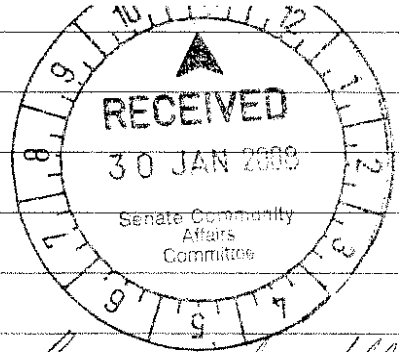


1.

Mr Noel V Hunt,

24 January 2008
Committee Secretary,
(The Senate Committee),
Department of the Senate
Parliament House,
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600



Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
Re THE COUPLE RATE FOR AGE PENSION -
ONE ELIGIBLE PARTNER

Dear Committee Members,

I wish to draw your attention to an anomaly and injustice in the above rate of Age Pension.

After my marriage in Australia in 2005 to a Russian Librarian my single rate of Age Pension was reduced to the couple rate. I drew to the attention of Centrelink the injustice of this as my wife was not in receipt of any Government benefit and she was not seeking one. I was told they abided by the legislation for Age Pension recipients for One Eligible Partner.

Please investigate the logic of the current legislation which I consider is discriminatory to Aged Persons on the single rate of Age Pension

2 over

and their female wives in the situation previously mentioned in paragraph number two.

The current position is thus -

Single rate Age Pension - \$ 543.50

couple rate one Eligible Partner - \$ 452.00

A Reduction of \$ 91 to me (and other).

My wife attends the TAFE 2 days each week for English Lessons and additionally an extra mornings lesson at home. She studies every other day for at least two hours - so she is not working.

The couple rate of age Pension makes some sense when two eligible persons are receiving the age Pension.

Also please consider the 'couple Rate age Pension' -

Single Rate 543.50 x 2 = \$1087.00

couple Rate 452.00 x 2 = \$904.00

A Difference of \$183.00

Two people living together results in a saving of energy - Electricity and for Ship Rates
BUT what other savings I don't know?
3 over

3.

The gap between the single rate for two people as against the couple rate Two-eligible Partners and One eligible Partner is widening markedly over the last ten years.

I would suggest a flat difference of \$ 40 to \$ 50 per fortnight between the single rate and the couple rate for the next five years.

Please consider amending the current legislation to give justice to me and others by rectifying the matter raised in Paragraph number two of page one.

yours faithfully,

W Hunt

Noel V Hunt