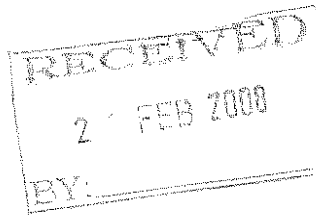


The Honorable Member.

MR Gary Humphries
Canberra A.C.T.



Dear Sir,

Last Sunday I read an article in the Sunday Courier Mail (9/2/08) concerning pensioners the heading was "Hes here to help".

I am a 68 year old pensioner "declared homeless" as I live on a mining claim at Rubyvale Qld, we live in 2 catavans under a Tin shed with my 7 year old daughter and my 31 year old son, who has moved out to start his family, I live out here as its the only place I can afford I have to cast my water 12kms away for out use, but being on the pension its very, very hard to make ends meet.

The thing that hard, is the price of food, everytime you go into Emerald super markets you see the prices have gone up again its never ending struggle to get my weeks supplies, I cant believe the prices, I cant afford the best meats and veg, have to buy the cheapest on every items, it really hurts when you have to live like a second class citizen, my trip to Emerald is a round trip of 120 kms so I have to restrict the use of my Hilux as we are paying \$1-51 cents a litre out here, which is far to high, but the price of diesel in Singapore is only 37 cents a litre, how come we have to pay so much out here.

You should try to live on the pension for awhile and see hard it is, you will be shocked, I never buy new clothes just have to get by on second hand ones, its very hard on my daughter when she sees bright cloths, and I have to say "No" its to dear.

I dont drink, gamble or take drugs my family

comes first every time, but cant you lift our standard of living, so we can live with a bit of dignity

As I still have a small 4 year old son back in Fiji, as I have to buy his school uniforms, books shoes and ordinary cloths, I send him a parcel of 5 klos it costs me \$67.00 every time, so my pension is gone before your eyes. I try to do my best but sometime its not enough.

Could you please fix up the Emerald hospital we havent had a dentist for 6 months, I have 2 teeth that needs filing very badly but 7 months have gone by and thay are not fixed also I have been waiting 3 years to get a new upper plate, no luck there either, been waiting 3 years to see a specialist about my prostate, will die before I see him I think its a bloody shame that all pensioners are treated this way, theres no need for us to have to live like this.

I have always held Australia in high regards and everyone is the "same" and when my beautiful daughter comes home from school saying kids at school are not very nice to her calling her "BLACK" it really hurts, it happen to my son James he went for a job interview and came out with tears in his eyes, saying that bloke didnt like me because I am "BLACK" whats wrong with Australia, I wrote to MR Beatie about this matter of course it got moved from one desk to another till it disappeared, so much for all of us being equal, I live with it, but very hurt.

I am not asking for pity, but please fix the pension, hospitals and service to pensioners, so we can live life to the full, with dignity and

pside, we have done our bit, I dont like the cities
and all the rubbish that goes with it, thats one of the
reasons I live in the bush, I can only hope that you
and you colleagues do make a difference and fix
some of the problem that incourter every day of
my life.

Yours Faithfully
John A. Hartley