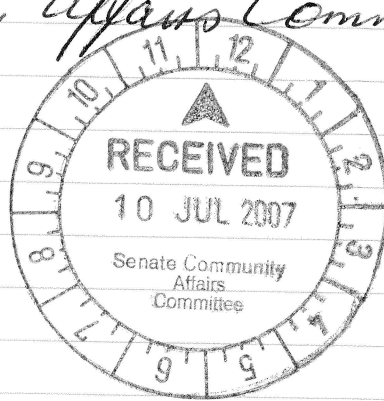


The Secretary,  
Senate Community Affairs Commission,  
P.O. Box 6100,  
Parliament House,  
A.C.T.

4/7/07



Dear Sir,

I am a 62 year old woman, living alone, and divorced for 19 years. Twelve months ago, I was made redundant after working for 4 years as a cleaner at an aged care facility. I am now on a Newstart pension of \$464.70 per fortnight. Immediately out of this amount \$201.25 goes to my fortnightly mortgage repayment. This is the lowest amount I can have on my 2 bedroom unit and is taken over 30 years. This leaves \$263 to buy food and pay bills. My phone bill comes in monthly, electricity and water charges every 3 months and I have a strata title insurance of \$255, also 3 monthly. I haven't yet mentioned my Council rates where I am currently \$1409 overdue in arrears, and can't scratch the surface of.

I will be eligible for the aged pension in October, 2008 and which I believe is about \$40 more than Newstart. However I feel the amount of \$250 per wk. is helplessly inadequate with today's cost of living and makes it quite impossible for pensioners to have

anything but the most basic quality of life. I am unable these days to go anywhere that costs money such as bus trips, even movies and this has had the effect of depriving me of many opportunities of being with my friends as I just plain can't afford it. This, I feel, is one of the far reaching and 'hidden' effects of poverty that is not talked about as much but is a very valid and vital part of a pensioner's well being and mental health, *ie* social contact.

I ask the Senate Commission to please raise pensions so this daily terrible struggle of hand to mouth is eased a little and also the long sleepless nights of worry.

Yours sincerely,  
Nea Campbell