CPSA
COMBINED PENSIONERS & SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC

THE VOICE OF PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS

Print Post Approved PP100001543 Printed Ed. ISSN: 1035-3615 - Digital Ed. ISSN: 220x7-5771 Dec 2021 - Jan 2022

SPEAKING OUT FOR PENSIONERS SINCE 1931

DO YOU SUPPORT A REVIEW OF THE PENSION?

THE review of the Age Pension in 2008 led to a one-off increase in the single rate pension across the Age Pension, the Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment.

The same review also saw the creation of an additional pension indexation mechanism, the Pensioner and Beneficiaries Cost of Living Index.

There is no doubt that the 2008 review improved the lot of single people relying on the pension, but it didn't address the plight of partnered people and it didn't address endemic issues that arise with dependence on a pension-type payment as the sole source of income.

While full rate pensioners are already struggling to cover ordinary living expenses, it's the big items that often prove to be killers. Literally, in some cases.

What has become clear over the last dozen years or so since the pension review is that pensioners whose sole source of income is the pension have great difficulty meeting the cost of home maintenance (if they are homeowners), replacement of whitegoods and essential appliances and furniture, the rent (if they rent privately), the cost of healthcare and the cost of transport (if they have no option to run their own car or have to use taxis).

Healthcare is of particular concern. CPSA members report major problems with accessing healthcare. They report being unable to afford consultation with medical specialists and unable to pay for the more expensive diagnostic tests. Certain prescription medications are not available under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. At the same time, simple clean-and-check-up visits to the dentist are unaffordable for many full rate pensioners, let alone dental therapies.

Quite often this means they forgo medical attention beyond bulk-billed services.

While it is true that the majority of expensive medical and dental services are available under public health programs, these programs are universally under-resourced, which means lengthy waiting lists. Quite often, the waiting times are so long that health conditions have deteriorated to the point where therapy can no longer be effective. No records are kept but how many

Continued page 4

Wishing all our readers season's greetings and a happy new year!

Letters

Letters are personal views only and do not necessarily reflect CPSA policy. Ed.

Age Pension review (1)

I SUPPORT a review of the Age Pension, in particular the Pensioner Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI)! That Index was obviously designed by government bean counters to include only those supermarket items not often required. What heartless governments do as a matter of routine is ignore the fact that a typical bag of food has risen from $45 to $65 in just 12 months.

What we need is an independent authority to determine the real percentage increase across the board with everything required to maintain an existence, i.e., not a luxury type but one that includes the full spectrum of what it costs to live.

Jim Christie

Age Pension review (2)

I DO urge members to seek a review of the pension. In the last six years energy costs have risen 25 per cent. Groceries and meat have both gone up due to drought that killed off a lot of Australia's livestock.

A leg of lamb used to be around $20, now it is $40. The Prime Minister wastes money all the time whilst pensioners struggle to survive. His Robodebt ripped more than $6,000 from me and I had to borrow from the bank to pay the government the $6,000.

Barbara Newman

Age Pension review (3)

I WOULD support a review into the social security situation for those that are clearly struggling to cover day to day essential needs.

We hear critics say welfare recipients are getting "free" money and so on. They don't "get" the money. Landlords, Woolworths, Coles, Telstra, pharmaceutical outlets, utilities service providers, and government agencies are the real recipients, because that's where the money ends up.

The money is barely in their hands for 24 hours before most of it has found its way into those companies' bank accounts.

Social security spending is stimulating the economy. GST, income tax and levies are also taken from that spending at the retailers' end. Their spending creates jobs, and those workers pay tax and on it goes.

An increase in pension payments will obviously keep that cycle going and provide the recipients with a better quality of life.

Dale Henry

CPSA Executive

(as at 7 June 2021)

Grace Brinckley OAM
CPSA President

Bob Jay
CPSA Secretary

George Ray
CPSA Treasurer

Brian Buckett
CPSA Senior Vice President

Alan Dickinson
CPSA Vice President

Shirley Bains
CPSA Assistant Treasurer

Victor Borg

Margaret Cuddihy

Peter Knox

Barbara Wright

Megan Lee
CPSA Manager

THE VOICE
OF PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS

Phone: 1800 451 488
Fax: (02) 8836 2101
Email: voice@cpsa.org.au
Giggle Page: Pam Townsend
Design: Antoine Mangion
Printer: Spotpress
24/26 Lilian Fowler Place,
Marrickville NSW 2204

All content is prepared by the CPSA *VOICE* editorial and production team.

THE VOICE
CPSA
Level 3
17-21 Macquarie Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

Disclaimer

Editorial content is written by CPSA staff and by contributors where indicated.

No responsibility is accepted for the accuracy of information contained in advertisements or text supplied by other organisations or individuals and/or typographical errors.

CPSA does not support or promote the products or views in paid advertising.

CPSA COMBINED PENSIONERS & SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION

Donations, Bequests, Membership and THE VOICE subscriptions

Membership is open to all who support the aims and objectives of CPSA

- ☐ I'd like to **renew** my membership or join CPSA as a Member and enclose my individual Membership fee of **$15** (Includes a free annual subscription to THE VOICE, valued at $32). I agree to be bound by the CPSA Constitution and uphold the Objectives and Policies of CPSA. I support the CPSA Objectives. I have not previously been expelled from CPSA or, if I have been expelled, I have attached a copy of my CPSA Executive exemption.
- ☐ Please send me information about my nearest Branch.
- ☐ I do not wish to join CPSA but would like to subscribe to THE VOICE (1 year—$32.00 incl. GST).
- ☐ I belong to an organisation and would like information about how we can become a Branch or an Affiliate of CPSA. (NB: Branches are covered by CPSA's $20 million Public Liability Insurance.)
- ☐ Please add a $5 / other: ____ donation to my membership so I can be a CPSA supporter. (All donations above $2 are tax deductible.)
- ☐ Please send me information about making a bequest to CPSA in my will.
- ☐ Yes, I agree to CPSA using my mobile number to send me information and other Member communication.
- ☐ Yes, I agree to CPSA using my email address to send me information and other Member communication.

Name:_____

Address:_____

State:_____Postcode:_____

Phone: _____ Mobile:_____

Email:_____

Payment details (for credit card):

Name on card:_____Card Number:_____

Expiry:_____ Amount:_____ Signature:_____

Please send to: CPSA, Level 3, 17-21 Macquarie St, Parramatta NSW 2150

Letters

Age Pension review (4)

YES, I support a review of the pension!

Why is there no full-scale media coverage of this? Wouldn't a nationwide petition for all to sign be helpful? Wouldn't it be helpful to send this kind of message/petition to the Government, and to get widespread media and TV coverage? It all seems to have gone very, very quiet for the plight of pensioners in Australia.

Eileen Williams

Age Pension review (5)

I FULLY support a review of pensions. Due to chronic illnesses both my husband and I are now on the disability pension. It's not something we planned to do as we both wanted to stay in the careers we had worked in for over 40 years, but unfortunately our illnesses decided otherwise.

The amount we get each fortnight is so low that I have to work out what bills we can afford to pay and what food we absolutely need. Special treats don't exist anymore and going out never happens. These we can live without but the essential things we forgo aren't things we should go without.

Please review the pension rate and make it something that we can actually "live" on each fortnight.

Marilyn Orman

Age Pension review (6)

I AGREE that a review is needed. As a country we should look after the not so well off: the unemployed, low-income wage earners and pensioners.

It is not about just increasing the payments but building the correct buildings, starting with housing for those on low incomes.

Robert Wilson

Age Pension review (7)

I HAVE been on the Age Pension for 25 years and while I own my own home, I have found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet.

While my whitegoods are in reasonable shape, I won't be able to afford to upgrade when the time comes.

I have many mobility issues. Consequently, I am mostly confined to home and rely on my canine companion/partner, who is due for her annual physical and dental check up tomorrow. That I will manage to pay for, but personal needs are a "no go" for months.

I feel a thorough review of the Age Pension and other social welfare payments are definitely due.

Ron Lloyd

Farm hand wage increases

FARM workers will be on $25 plus an hour. The price of vegetables and other produce will rise at the supermarket. O la la, the poor pensioner, homeless and disadvantaged will be on the bread line. A pension rise must be considered.

Victor Borg

Emergency Services - Public Hospital Unavailable

I RECENTLY had to call for an ambulance because of a heart problem.

I was told that Royal North Shore Hospital was "off the matrix" and that they could take me to the Sydney Adventist Hospital, a private hospital.

In outpatients, I was told that the $360 admission fee would be waived.

However, I needed pathology tests, and these would not be bulk billed as I was in a private hospital. If I went to a public hospital, I would not have this added burden of being financially out of pocket.

Fortunately, after a very stressful phone call to the pathology lab they changed the bill to a bulk billed item.

I should not have to have made that phone call.

I am glad that I did not have any imaging done.

I would also like to know how and why a hospital goes "off the matrix". Perhaps next time I should call a taxi.

Further to my original letter, I now have to forward a cheque from Medicare to a doctor at the Adventist Hospital.

Henry Foster

Ageing in place for renters

THIS is a comment about your article "How sure are you that you will never move again?" (*THE VOICE*, November 2021).

It's all very well for the owner of a house wanting not to move, they are used to the environment, the shops and people nearby.

Homeowners can make the decision to move or not, but what about the renters? They are at the mercy of the landlord

I really would like to be able to rent a place suitable for my age (72), where I can age in place and not have to worry about moving.

I really would like to move to a place more suitable. My name is down for affordable housing accommodation, but I understand the waiting list is very long, as a result of not enough social housing being available.

So here we are. Maybe laws for renters should change to give us pensioners the right to rent for life to give us the chance to age in place.

Laura Olivetti

Send a letter to *THE VOICE*

THE VOICE, CPSA
Level 3, 17-21 Macquarie Street,
Parramatta NSW 2150

voice@cpsa.org.au

You must include your name for the letter to be published, though this may be omitted in publication if the letter contains personal information. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

CPSA Funding

CPSA receives funding support from the NSW Government Department of Communities and Justice, and the Australian Government Department of Health.

From page 1

people die while they are on the waiting list for cataract surgery.

Also, the poverty faced by well over a quarter of a million Australians aged over-55 but not yet of pension age is severe. Despite the recent, one-off increase in JobSeeker, their payment is still well below the pension: 35 per cent below the pension for singles and 21 per cent below the pension for couples.

It is clear that the majority of this age group will never find a permanent job. They are condemned to eking out an existence until they reach pension age. At that point, they will merely move from a state of extreme poverty to a state where they are unable to fund anything beyond their daily needs.

It is clear that the time has come for a review into the social security arrangements for people of all ages on low, fixed incomes such as the Age Pension, the Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment and JobSeeker for the long term. CPSA has written to the Australian Government advocating such a review.

If you support this, please contact us with your support via email on voice@cpsa.org.au, or ring CPSA on 1800 451 488, or send CPSA a letter at Level 3, 17-21 Macquarie Street, Parramatta NSW 2150.

Cashless Welfare Minister responds to CPSA

IN a letter responding to CPSA's concerns about the Cashless Welfare Card, the Families and Social Services Minister has said that the Australian Government "has no intention of extending [the Cashless Welfare Card] to Age Pensioners".

The Minister's letter can be read in the following article.

CPSA accepts that the Minister has committed the Australian Government to not putting Age Pensioners as a group on the Cashless Welfare Card.

VOICE readers will be relieved to learn that Age Pensioners as a group will not be put onto the Card.

It is also clear from the Minister's letter that under certain conditions some Age Pensioners could be put on the Cashless Welfare Card as they have been in the Cape York region.

In the Cape York region, some (not all) Age Pensioners have been put on the Cashless Welfare Card compulsorily as "a result of a request by the Queensland's Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC), which is a statutory body conceived by Aboriginal Australians and driven by community members".

Obviously, what has occurred in the Cape York region can occur elsewhere. For example, if more trial areas were created, organisations similar to the FRC could be asking for this. Then, the same could happen.

The Government claims that what happens in the Cape York region "is a unique circumstance and is not a precedent for the rest of Australia".

CPSA disagrees with the Minister on that point: it does set a precedent, because anything that happens for the first time sets a precedent.

However, it doesn't set a precedent for all Age Pensioners to be put on the Cashless Welfare Card simply on the basis of their status of Age Pensioner.

Age Pensioners can put aside any fears that they as a group will be put on the Cashless Welfare Card. This will not happen.

However, anyone on a social security payment other than the Age Pension and living in a Cashless Welfare Card trial area has no choice and is put on the Cashless Welfare Card.

This includes people up to the age of 67 on the Disability Support Pension, the Carer Payment and the JobSeeker Payment.

CPSA continues to oppose putting anyone on to the Cashless Welfare Card who doesn't want to be put on it. People who have been forced on to the card have reported that they find it not only unreasonably restrictive but also humiliating and demeaning.

Crossword by Luke Koller

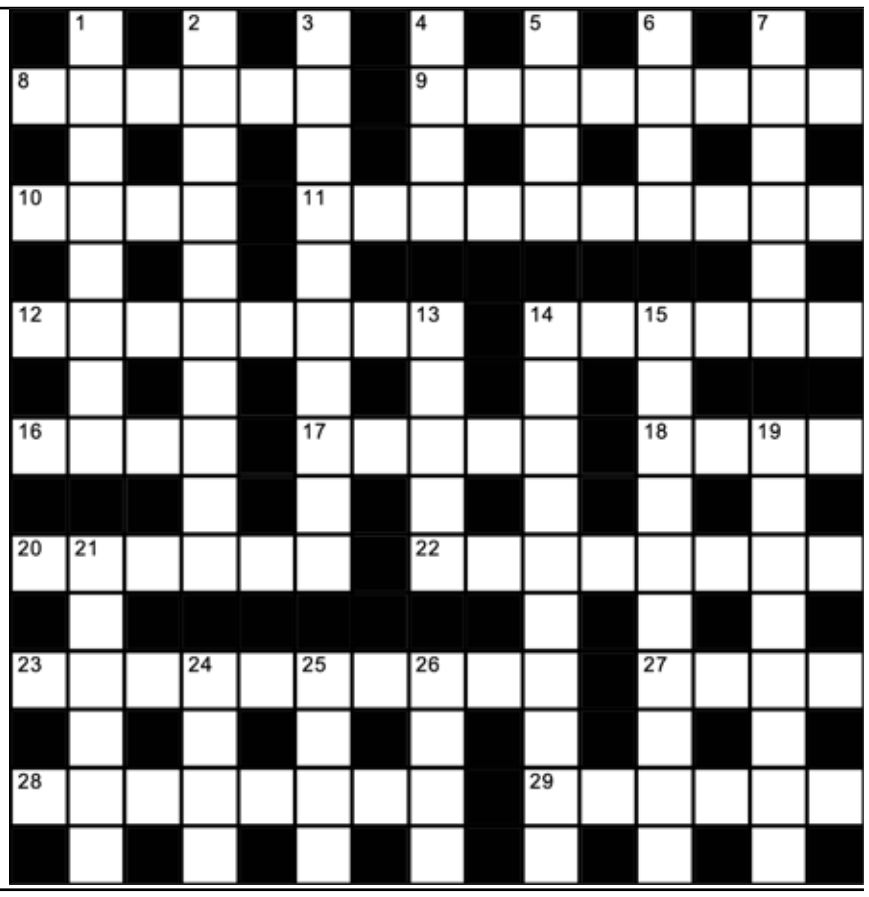
Across

8 Something politicians are meant to do
9 Protect from decaying
10 An empty space
11 The opposite of externally
12 The act of constructing
14 Holds buildings together
16 Be adjacent or come together
17 A ship of the desert
18 The back of the neck
20 Needed for a roof
22 Imported in secret
23 Belonging to the past
27 Something to travel on
28 Reflect or resemble
29 Rocks used for roofing

Down

1 Firm in purpose or belief
2 Things in orbit
3 Recalling the past
4 Give off, or discharge
5 For mooring ships
6 A portico
7 An orchestral instrument
13 Amusements or pastimes
14 No colour
15 The activity of management
19 From an earlier date
21 The start
24 Separated by force
25 Not common
26 Surrender or relinquish possession

Solution on back page



Cashless Welfare Card letter from the Minister for Families and Social Services

BELOW is the text of the Social Services Minister's letter to CPSA. Note that:

• Senator Patrick's amendment made it possible to put Age Pensioners on to the Cashless Welfare Card for *the first time*. Before that time, in each income management trial area Age Pensioners had been exempted by a provision people of pension age could not be put on to CDC. That exemption does not apply to the Cape York trial area. In other words, Senator Patrick's amendment did not achieve what the Minister purports it achieved in her letter.

• CPSA's letter to the Social Services Minister is dated 30 September 2021. Four weeks later, on 28 October 2021, the Minister stated in Senate Estimates that Age Pensioners as a group would not be put on CDC.

• In a press conference *after* Senate Estimates on 28 October 2021, the Minister clarified the nature of a national roll-out of CDC.

The text of the Minister's letter:

The Morrison Government has no plans to force Age Pensioners on to the CDC [Cashless Debit Card]. We have never had such a plan and never will.

On 9 December 2020, the Government supported an amendment to the Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Continuation of Cashless Welfare) Bill 2020 filed by Independent Senator Rex Patrick which "calls on the Government to provide a commitment that no recipient of the Age Pension or a Veteran or Service Pension will be placed on the Cashless Debit Card, with the exception of those who volunteer or are referred by the Family Responsibility Commission (FRC), child protection workers, social workers or the Alcohol Mandatory Treatment Tribunal in the Northern Territory".

On 28 October 2021, I reaffirmed this commitment, clearly stating at Senate Estimates that the Government has no intention of extending the CDC to Age Pensioners. I have made this same commitment countless times on the public record.

As you mention, Age Pensioners in the five communities in the Cape York region can be placed on the CDC. This exception in the legislation is a result of a request by Queensland's Family Responsibilities Commission (FRC), which is a statutory body conceived by Aboriginal Australians and driven by community members. This continues the longstanding cooperation between the FRC and the Commonwealth that has been supporting positive change in these communities since 2007 and is integral to our commitment to Closing the Gap. Age Pension recipients in Cape York are not automatically placed on the CDC and can only be placed on it if the FRC has issued them a notice under State legislation. This is a unique circumstance and is not a precedent for the rest of Australia.

Age Pension recipients in CDC regions can choose to volunteer to participate in the CDC program if they wish. These volunteers may choose to leave the CDC at any time. People volunteer for a range of reasons, including to help budget and save, to ensure they have money to pay for bills and other essentials and to protect themselves from being others to hand over cash.

In discussion with my office I understand the CPSA also flagged concerns with a statement I made to the media last year where I said "we are seeking to put all Income Management onto the universal platform". To clarify, Income Management is the name of a specific program and longstanding program where participants typically use the BasicsCard. The term is not synonymous with social security payments in a general sense. Income Management was established in the Northern Territory in 2007 and expanded to 12 sites between 2008 and 2013. As I went on to explain in the press conference, there are multiple forms of Income Management in place across Australia and the Government is seeking [to] transfer people who are currently on Income Management to the CDC platform.

We need Common Sense Directed Care!

IN aged care, there are currently two home care programs in Australia.

One is the Home Care Packages (HCPs) program and supports about 100,000 people, with as many people waiting for support.

The other is the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), which supports more than 800,000 people. It has no waiting list.

The Government wants to turn these two programs into one. On the face of it, it would make sense to start running the problem-plagued HCPs program like the overall problem-free Commonwealth Home Support Program.

One of the main problems plaguing the HCPs program is that people get a set amount allotted according to one of four levels of care. Out of that money, HCP providers bill you for administration costs. They get taken out first. Whatever is left over can then be spent on wages for care staff to come out to you.

This means that in many cases people are not getting enough care. CPSA thinks it doesn't really make sense to start running the other program, the CHSP, in the same way. People in the CHSP are generally getting the care they need. People in the HCPs program are often not getting the care they need, plus there's a waiting list on which are people who are not getting care at all.

If the Government wants to turn these two programs into one, the first thing to do would be to fund Home Care Packages the way care is funded under the other program, the CHSP.

This would mean requiring providers to provide actual care first and what's left over can go towards administration costs.

It would also mean that people needing care would not be assigned with providers in this way.

The assumption people needing care are at the same level as care providers has led to all sorts of instances where people are not getting what they need.

In a perfect world, where care providers are all honest operators who put the wellbeing of their clients first, the HCP program would be wonderful.

But the world is far from perfect.

Here's why HCP doesn't work well.

Each of the four levels of HCP attracts a set amount in subsidies, but not everyone needs all of that money. So, providers have an incentive to provide services that are not needed.

Because the regulator is pretty slack in checking up on whether or not providers provide safe and good quality care, predatory providers charge as much as they can in administration and case management fees and skimp on the care services they provide, even on the care services that are needed.

These are all problems that don't occur in the CHSP, the home care we all know of old. The reason for this is that CHSP providers are block-funded. They have an incentive to provide as many needed care services for an overall subsidy they receive to cover all of their operations.

When they report about services provided in the year just past, they are effectively also applying for next year's funding. They have an incentive to have spent everything on services people have actually asked for.

The CHSP funding system is not perfect, but it's a sight better than the HCP funding system. CHSP certainly gets rid of the shonks and the predators that abound in the HCP program.

Why do we still have HCP?

Why are we moving CHSP into HCP?

Why one home care program works, and the other home care program doesn't

THE very successful Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) should not be merged into the very unsuccessful Home Care Packages program (HCP). The merger should be the other way around.

It's disappointing that these things have to be argued.

One of the reasons that HCP is so unsuccessful is that it assumes (1) people needing care know just as much about aged care as the providers do, (2) know just as much as the providers about how their care needs can be met, and (3) are able to interact with HCP providers as though they are equals.

This may be true for a minority of people needing care, but not for the majority. Many are frail and too distracted by their physical or mental condition to be able to deal

Have a glimpse at hell on earth: NSW public housing

THE following is a direct account by a tenant living in public housing in NSW. The name of the tenant and their address are known to CPSA.

CPSA has no reason to doubt the truth of the tenant's account.

When I first got here the screens were ripped out and there were no locks on any of the windows, neighbours from a nearby block took them before I moved in so they could refurnish their own units. I've had to fix everything up myself.

There's still plenty of residue from a fire that was here. There's plenty of electrical problems. When you press the light in the bathroom while it's raining you get zapped. I've called Housing but apparently that's not an issue.

Walking up these stairs is like walking through a graveyard, everything's boarded up. There are only three or four residents in the block of units, there's seven boarded up. And apparently according to Housing they're trying to clear this place out.

I constantly hear people fighting, getting abused, gun shots, the police are constantly here. But if you have an issue and you call the police you are then targeted by aggressive neighbours.

There's no security here. There are drug addicts who leave their syringes lying around and they know your paydays. I even have to hide my groceries from neighbours, or they'll abuse me and take them off me. I've been assaulted, my letterbox gets broken into and my unit has been broken into many times.

I can't explain how scary it is.

It's like they shove us here and hope that we disappear. Maybe we're too much effort.

This is not living. It's not even surviving. I just want to live and be safe.

This is not taking place in an impoverished third world country but in the largest and economically most prosperous state of the Australian federation, New South Wales.

These insights raise serious questions for the NSW Land and Housing Corporation and NSW Department of Communities and Justice, the responsible agencies for public housing in NSW to answer.

How can these agencies neglect these dwellings so much that tenants are forced to live in such dangerous conditions?

How can these agencies allow the tenants to whom they owe a duty of care to be intimidated, fear for their life, and be left to the mercy of menacing neighbours?

How can these agencies allow public housing dwellings to be boarded up and be uninhabited while more than 50,000 households linger on the public housing waiting list?

If you have, or have had, similar experiences, or if you know of similar public housing disgraces, contact CPSA by email voice@cpsa.org.au or phone 1800 451 488.

Will term deposit rates going up be good for you?

ECONOMISTS all agree that interest rates (including term deposit rates) going up depends on the rate of inflation going up.

Last September, the Age Pension was increased by more than what pensioners had become used to over the last few years. This was due to what was called a 'spike' in inflation. Economists are now divided into two camps: the inflation-spike-is-here-to-stay camp and the inflation-spike-is-temporary camp.

Both camps acknowledge that shortages of labour, shipping capacity, microchips, energy and more caused the spike.

Will these shortages persist and/or others arise, is the question.

If they do, the price of whatever is in short supply will continue to be high or go up.

If these shortages don't persist, things will go back to the way they were: low inflation, low interest rates.

The fact that there are respected economists in both camps shows that nobody knows the answer to the question whether shortages will continue.

CPSA does not employ a single economist, so is not in a position to pick a camp.

But we will point out the effect of inflation on the rates of term deposits.

At the moment, the rate of inflation is 3 per cent. The rate for an annual term deposit is approximately a third of 1 per cent. This means that a term deposit of $100,000 loses 3.5 per cent (0.3%-3%=-2.7% or $2,700) of its purchasing power over twelve months.

Ten years ago, the rate of inflation was 4 per cent. The rate of an annual term deposit was 5.3 per cent. This meant that a term deposit of $100,000 gained $1,300 in purchasing power (5.3%-4%=1.3% or $1,300).The difference is that by putting money into a term deposit now costs you, while back then it didn't cost you.

The psychology at work here is that ten years ago someone with an annual term deposit of $100,000 would get $5,300 and regarded this as $5,300 gained (so did Centrelink, unfortunately) and to be spent, not the $1,300 they actually got.

Ten years ago, because of inflation, a term deposit holder felt richer than they actually were.

Now, with nominal interest income of $300 the term deposit holder is and feels poorer but does not feel as poor as they actually are.

If the current inflation rate stays or increases even more, interest rates (including those on term deposits) will inevitably go up.

But if interest rates will necessarily outstrip the increased inflation rate is not certain.

Nothing in economics is.

Could you be in a cheaper super fund?

SUPER is getting cheaper, although annually total fees paid by Australia's 13.5 million super fund members still nudge $30 billion.

But average super fund fees dropped one per cent during last financial year, according to financial information group Rainmaker.

Rainmaker noted that this reduction happened "despite a ten per cent rise in superannuation savings last financial year and record-breaking investment returns".

In other words, super funds are becoming less dependent on commission-based fees. They're starting to charge to recover expenses plus a fee for their trouble of managing your super.

According to Rainmaker "super funds are working hard to become more efficient and lower their costs, but at the same time white-hot competition and regulatory scrutiny is forcing them to cut their fees as fast as they can".

This is good news for the vast majority of working superannuation fund members who are too busy to worry much about their super. They generally are members of MySuper funds. These are funds employers pay contributions into on behalf of members who haven't chosen a fund themselves. MySuper funds are default funds.

Even these are lowering their fees. This is likely to continue as non-performing MySuper funds are forced out. Their member balances will be transferred to MySuper funds that do perform.

Six in ten default MySuper funds cut their fees in 2020/21, according to Rainmaker.

But on average, they are still not as cheap as the best retail and industry funds where members have actually made a choice to have their contributions paid into these funds.

The moral is: it always pays to pay attention.

While industry-wide fees averaged one per cent, fees for the best default MySuper sector averaged 1.08 per cent after falling from 1.13 per cent in 2020.Also, the fee gap between not-for-profit funds and retail funds is closing fast with the average total expense ratio for not-for-profit and retail funds now being almost identical, at 1.07 per cent and 1.08 per cent respectively.

The table (right) lists the lowest-cost default MySuper funds. AMG Corporate, which is on this list, operates AMG MySuper, which is an officially non-performing MySuper fund. While AMG MySuper may be cheap, it might be a good idea to switch to one of the others after checking their performance out.

Better still, find a fund that gives you the best return after fees!

Have you been stapled to your super fund?

A SURVEY conducted on behalf of Industry Super Australia has found that 80 per cent of Australians do not know about super stapling.

Stapling means that a worker who doesn't pick a super fund themselves stays with that fund even if and when they change employer.

The stapling reform is a positive step that stops workers being put into a new fund every time they change jobs. They end up with more funds than they can keep track of and pay fees to each of these funds.

Stapling prevents this.

There are a number of default funds for workers who don't pick a fund themselves. These are called MySuper funds.

MySuper funds all undergo a performance test. Unfortunately, not all MySuper funds perform well. Some even perform very badly.

So, while being stapled to a fund is good if you don't want to pick a fund yourself, you do need to make sure you're not stapled to a dud fund.

Arguably, dud MySuper funds will be forced out of the industry eventually, but by then you will have lost money and lots of it.

So, even if you super bores you to tears, make an effort and make sure you're in a good MySuper fund.

10 lowest cost MySuper products open to the public 2020-21

Rank	MySuper Product	Total Expense
1	UniSuper	0.65%
2	Bendigo SSSE	0.70%
3	AMG Corporate	0.70%
4	Virgin Super Employer	0.73%
5	QSuper Accumulation	0.74%
6	Suncorp ESB	0.77%
7	AustralianSuper	0.77%
8	AMIST Super	0.81%
9	Rest Super	0.89%
10	EISS Super	0.89%

The MySuper funds that failed the first annual performance test are:

- AMG MySuper
- Balanced (MySuper)
- MySuper Balanced
- MySuper Investment Option
- BT Super MySuper
- VISSF Balanced Option (MySuper Product)

CPSA Facebook and Twitter

CPSA is very active on Social Media. Check out our Facebook page at facebook.com/combined.pensioners and our Twitter account @CPSANSW

NSW Seniors' Christmas Concerts

The annual FREE NSW Seniors' Christmas Concerts will take place in Tweed Heads on Thursday 16 December. The 2021 concerts will include performances from Casey Donovan, Harrison Craig, Nathan Foley, Imogen Clark and Lorenzo Rositano.

Free tickets to the live concert are available now at
twintownssales1.sales.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/17634

If you cannot attend in person, the concerts will be available to watch live online. If you are interested in watching the event online, you can register now at
events.humanitix.com/nsw-seniors-christmas-concerts

The concerts will also be broadcast on SBS at 3:30pm on Christmas Day and shown in participating local clubs across the state in the weeks following the event.

Super funds told to get their snouts out of the trough

SNOUTS out of the trough is the long overdue message the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) is sending the Australian superannuation funds it regulates.

APRA has slammed super funds for spending members' money on sporting sponsorships and marketing campaigns without being able to justify their expenditure.

There are many instances of funds spending money with "insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the expenditure would be in the best financial interests of members", including cases of funds giving free sporting tickets and other sponsorship benefits to their staff.

Super funds must justify sponsorships and spending on marketing as necessary to attract and retain members. Often this does not happen.

Is there a justification for, for example, for Cbus having naming rights over the Robina Stadium on the Gold Coast, or Hostplus sponsoring the Melbourne Storm rugby league team?

Super funds argue that such advertising is necessary to attract and retain members, with the benefits of greater scale passed on to all members through lower fees.

According to Super Consumers Australia director Xavier O'Halloran it is "appalling to see members' money splashed on massive advertising campaigns, sponsorships and conferences put on by the industry lobby groups".

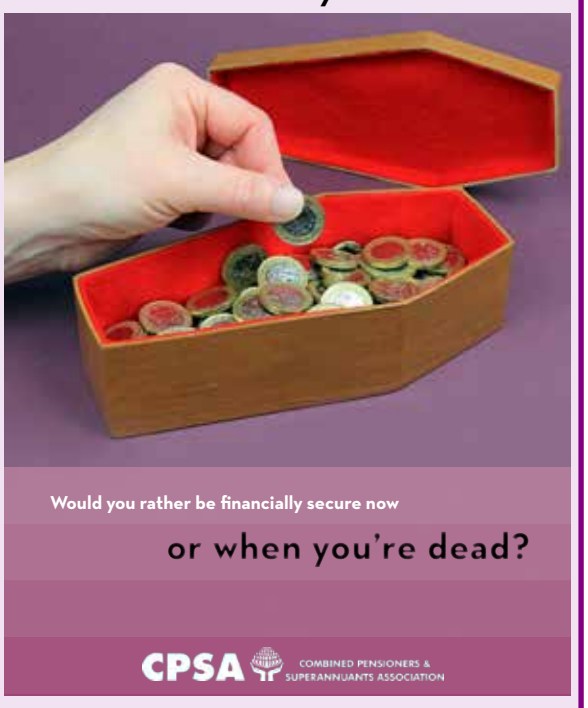
APRA has put funds on notice. It is weighing up possible changes to its prudential guidance about spending on advertising campaigns, sporting team sponsorships and payments to external organisations that may not be in members' best interests.

CPSA's view is that there is absolutely nothing wrong with superannuation funds advertising their superior investment performance in order to attract more members. If a fund grows in size, it can cut its costs and this benefits new and old members alike.

However, the senior people running superannuation funds must realise that fund marketing and advertising must not be designed to gain personal perks in addition to their generally generous remuneration packages.

Would you rather be financially secure now or when you're dead?

Many retired people try to avoid doing what they must do if they are to be financially secure



How sure are you that you will never move again?

Do you ever catch yourself saying that you will never move again or that they will have to carry you out of your house in a box? But chances are that, as you continue to age, your home will start to let you down a little bit or even a lot. You may be able to overcome this without moving or you may not. You have to think about what could go wrong and think of things you would be able to do to make sure you can keep your independence.

Both booklets are available at cpsa.org.au/publications/ or ring 1800 451 488 for a printed version.

If you think enduring powers of attorney are simple, you should read this

EVERYBODY would agree that preventing financial abuse of older Australians is important. But one of the things that can play a major role in doing that is in a terrible mess.

We're talking about enduring powers of attorney.

A power of attorney (without the 'enduring') gives an agent the power to act for another person (the principal) to make decisions about the principal's property, finances, or medical care. A power of attorney is often used when the principal can't be present to sign necessary legal documents for a financial transaction.

A power of attorney sets limits to what the agent can do on behalf of the principal and often the period in which the agent can act.

An enduring power of attorney, on the other hand, remains in effect if the principal becomes ill or disabled and cannot act personally.

An enduring power of attorney is most often used where people lose mental capacity. People suffering from advanced dementia often have enduring powers of attorney in place.

Enduring powers of attorney are in a terrible mess in Australia on several counts.

First, the eight states and territories that make up the Australian federation all have their own laws governing enduring powers of attorney, and they are all different.

Second, it is not always clear (to banks, for example) if an enduring power of attorney document is real, revoked or a forgery. The federal Government has undertaken work to put in place a National Register of Enduring Powers of Attorney.

However, we still have eight sets of laws for eight jurisdictions. Obviously, these laws need to be the same wherever you go. This has been done for other things. For example, defamation laws are state and territory laws but they're the same everywhere. It can be done.

Third, because of all the different laws, it is difficult to educate people about how enduring powers of attorney should be used.

This is a huge problem in itself and allows enduring powers of attorney to be exploited by savvy and unscrupulous people. It is common for a person holding a power of attorney to sign over property to themselves, change a will to their advantage and restrict access by friends and family members to the person they are meant to be helping.

It obviously needs quite a bit of thought and consideration before the enduring powers of attorney are assigned to someone. If things go wrong with an enduring power of attorney, they most often go wrong at this point. The consequences can be devastating, emotionally, psychologically and financially.

CPSA and other organisations, including the Human Rights Commission, is seeking a commitment from the federal, state and territory governments to reform this area of law.

Information hotline for older Australians during COVID-19 pandemic

Now that vaccinations have started up, the Australian Government's COVID-19 information hotline may again prove its worth. The hotline provides particular support to those accessing aged care services.

Phone 1800 171 866

Disability COVID-19 Information Hotline

The Australian Government's Disability Information Helpline for people with disability, their families, carers, support workers and services who need help because of COVID-19 continues to operate. **Phone free call 1800 643 787 or use the National Relay Service on 133 677.**

The Helpline will help connect you with the right service, give you reliable and accessible information, or can connect you with a Councillor for emotional support if that is what you need.

Tell us your story

CPSA wants to hear about your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ring CPSA on 1800 451 488 or email voice@cpsa.org.au

CPSA Head Office re-opens fully in the New Year

While CPSA adheres to the COVID-19 guidelines issued by the NSW Government in relation to staff working from home, CPSA Head Office in Parramatta will re-open on 10 January 2022. This means that CPSA can again be contacted through the main switchboard. If you ring CPSA within office hours, you will once again be answered by a real person. CPSA switchboard can be reached on 1800 451 455.

Donations

THE VOICE publishes donations to CPSA of $35 and over. All other donations are most welcome and equally appreciated.

Donald Brooks	$35
Joan Cann	$35
Edith Honold	$55
John Howley	$35
Pat Jessop	$85
Moira Lloyd	$55
Shirley Waring	$35
Lee Warn	$55

CPSA Constitution and Annual Report

Please ring Head Office on 1800 451 488 if you would like a copy of the CPSA Constitution or CPSA's 2020/21 Annual Report to be posted to you. Alternatively, copies can be obtained online at www.cpsa.org.au/about-combined-pensioners-and-superannuants-association/

CPSA Information Directory

INCOME SECURITY

Centrelink
Age Pension **13 23 00**
DSP/Carer benefits **13 27 17**
Family Assistance **13 61 50**

Welfare Rights Centre
1800 226 028

British Pensions in Australia
1300 308 353

HOUSING

Housing NSW
Public and community housing
1800 422 322

Tenants' Union Advice Line
1800 251 101

Tenancy Advice & Advocacy Service
Find your local service
tenants.org.au

Find the help you need with
myagedcare
1800 200 422
www.myagedcare.gov.au
Australian Government | myagedcare

GOODS & SERVICES

NSW Energy & Water Ombudsman (EWON)
1800 246 545

Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman
1800 062 058

NSW Seniors Card
13 77 88

No Interest Loans Scheme
Loans to purchase essential household items
13 64 57

Energy Made Easy
Price comparisons
1300 585 165
energymadeeasy.gov.au

NSW Ageing and Disability Abuse Helpline
NSW GOVERNMENT
1800 628 221
(Mon-Fri 9-5)

medicare
132 011
24/7
GENERAL ENQUIRIES HELPLINE

Advance Care Planning Australia
BE OPEN | BE READY | BE HEARD
1300 208 582
PLANNING FUTURE HEALTHCARE PREFERENCES

ndis
National Disability Insurance Scheme
1800 800 110
DISABILITY SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE UNDER 65

afca
Australian Financial Complaints Authority
1800 931 678
DISPUTE RESOLUTION FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES

HEALTH, WELLBEING & TRANSPORT

Office of Hearing Services
Subsidised hearing aids
1800 500 726

National Dementia Helpline
1800 100 500

VisionCare
Subsidised spectacles
1300 847 466

Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme
transport.nsw.gov.au/ttss
1800 623 724

National Continence Helpline
1800 330 066

Rape Crisis Centre
24hours/7days
1800 424 017

National Domestic Violence Helpline
1800 200 526

NSW Health Care Commission
1800 043 159

Carers NSW
1800 242 636

Aged Care Complaints Commissioner
1800 951 822

Lifeline
13 11 14

Australian Men's Sheds
1300 550 009

NSW Public Dental Health Services
Call NSW Health for details
1800 639 398

Cancer Council NSW
13 11 20

Exit International
Information about euthanasia
1300 103 948

Mental Health Crisis Team
24/7 for mentally ill people in crisis
6205 1065

LEGAL

Seniors Rights Service
General law, retirement village, strata law
1800 424 079

Fair Trading
Rental bond and tenancy info
13 32 20

Law Access
Referrals for legal help
1300 888 529

NSW Dispute Resolution
1800 990 777

Women's Legal Services NSW
Family law, domestic, violence, sexual assault & discrimination
1800 801 501

RIGHTS

Australian Human Rights Commission
Complaints about discrimination
1300 369 711

Commonwealth Ombudsman
1300 362 072

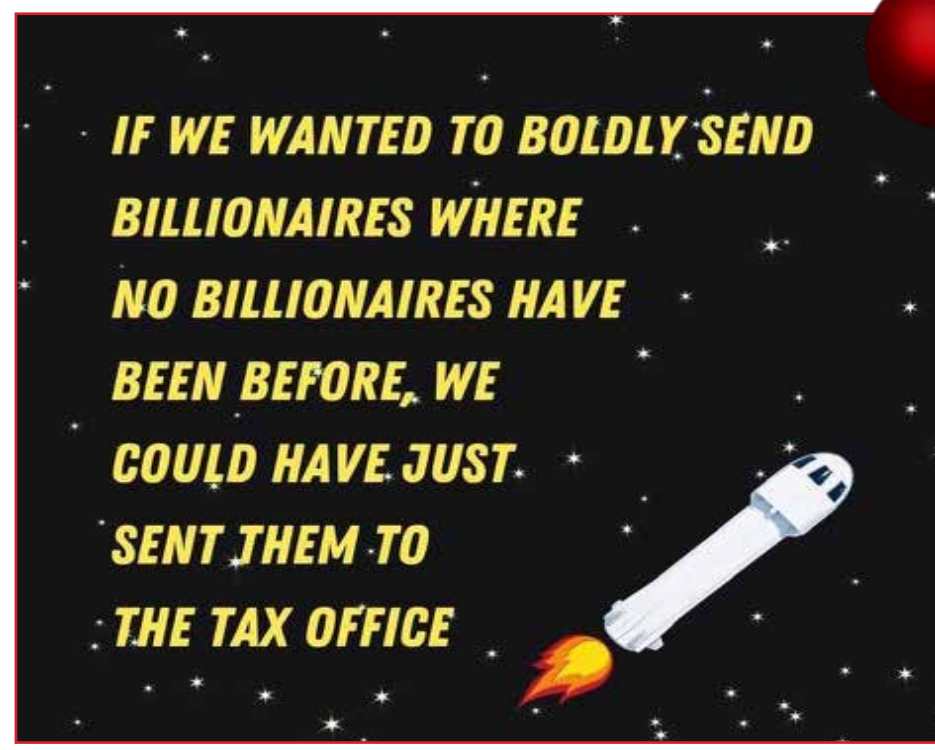
NSW Ombudsman's Office
1800 451 524

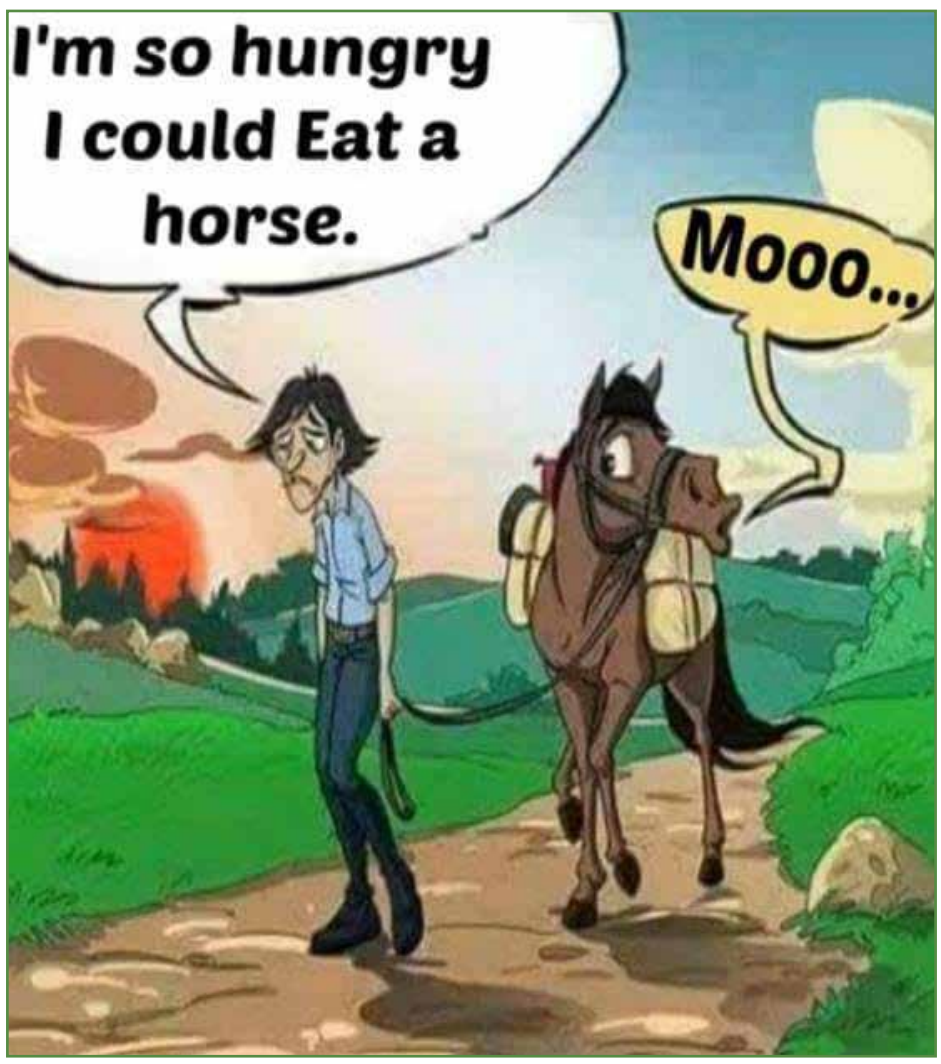
NSW Trustee and Guardian
1300 360 466

Guardianship Tribunal
1300 006 228

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)
Individual advocacy for aged care recipients
1800 700 600

Giggle Page





Pre internet chat room using
An old version of windows...

Crossword Solution

Crossword on Page 4

	1 R		2 S		3 R		4 E		5 P		6 S		7 V	
8 D	E	B	A	T	E		9 M	A	I	N	T	A	I	N
	S		T		M		I		E		O		O	
10 H	O	L	E		11 I	N	T	E	R	N	A	L	L	Y
	L		L		N								I	
12 B	U	I	L	D	I	N	13 G		14 C	E	15 M	E	N	T
	T		I		S		A		O		A			
16 M	E	E	T		17 C	A	M	E	L		18 N	A	19 P	E
			E		E		E		O		A		R	
20 J	21 O	I	S	T	S		22 S	M	U	G	G	L	E	D
	R								R		E		D	
23 H	I	S	24 T	O	25 R	I	26 C	A	L		27 R	O	A	D
	G		O		A		E		E		I		T	
28 M	I	R	R	O	R	E	D		29 S	L	A	T	E	S
	N		E		E		E		S		L		D	