



## Older Australians and carers



# Pensioners reward

Sue Dunlevy

FOUR million pensioners, carers, seniors and veterans will get one-off payments worth \$1400 for singles and \$2100 for couples in December as the Government tries to boost the economy.

Four weeks ago, the Government voted down a \$30 a week rise in the single pension, asking pensioners to wait until a review delivered changes in next year's Budget.

Yesterday, the global economic crisis led the Prime Minister to announce generous lump-sum pension payments early to jump-start the crisis-ridden economy.

The payments are equivalent to a \$35 weekly rise for single aged pensioner and \$26 a week for couples. They go way beyond helping just the 800,000 single pensioners who would have been

helped by the Opposition's plan to raise the single pension.

A further two million others will benefit.

This includes 320,000 self-funded retirees who hold a Commonwealth Seniors Card and earn less than \$50,000 if single or \$80,000 as a couple.

Couples on the age pension will also get a lump-sum payment.

More than 700,000 Disability pensioners, 130,000 carer payment recipients and 285,000 veterans will also get the money.

More than 100,000 Wife and Widow B pensioners and 1000 people of age pension age receiving the Parenting Payment, Special Benefit and Austudy will also get the payments.

The 470,000 recipients of the Carers Allowance will get a one-off payment of \$1000 for each eligible person they care for.

Single parents receiving the parenting payment, those on Austudy and the unemployed are the only income-support recipients to miss out.

Single parents will get the \$1000 per child family tax benefit bonus.

The payments will only go to those who were already receiving their pension payments on October 14, anyone who applies for one of these payments from today will miss out.

Mr Rudd said the lump-sum payments, to be delivered from December 8, were a down payment on the comprehensive reform to the pension system the Government was planning for next year.

The Government is still planning a major reform of the pension system that it will introduce in next year's Budget.

## Payment just like a lottery win

Alison Rehn

"YOU bloody beauty!" It was as if struggling pensioner Margaret Thomas had just won the lottery.

And in a way she had.

The 73-year-old had just found out Kevin Rudd was going to give her an early Christmas present — a lump sum payment of \$1400.

"I'm going to buy the biggest bit of pork you've ever seen," she said.

"I have nine grandchildren — they'll all get something for Christmas now. And I'll be able to pay all my bills, too."

A month ago the Werrington pensioner told *The Daily Telegraph* she had voted for Mr Rudd, but was so far disappointed with her choice.

Now she's singing a different tune. "Labor's done a wonderful job. The Prime Minister couldn't have given us a better Christmas present," she said.

Her daughter-in-law Lisa Thomas, 34, was overjoyed to learn she was in line for a one-off lump sum payment of \$3000 — \$1000 for each of her children.

Ms Thomas, who lives at Kingswood, said at least some of the payment will be spent on her daughters Portia, 9, and Starr, 10, and son Daniel, 2.



Good news: Margaret Thomas, 73, with her daughter-in-law Lisa, 34, and granddaughters Starr, 10, and Portia, 9

### What the experts think

JOHN SYMOND

Aussie Home Loans managing director



Overall the initiative to increase the first home grant is a good one but it won't work in areas like Sydney and could even push prices of new housing up. To get new land release in Sydney you have to drive a couple of hours out of town and pay \$300,000 or \$400,000, which is a joke. Then on each block of land on average there's \$150,000 worth of costs for services which has been totally passed on to the developer and which they then totally pass on to the poor old first homebuyer.

WILHELM HARNISH

Master Builders Australia CEO



It is very much welcome for home builders in NSW, and Sydney in particular given the city's new housing market has been languishing for the past 12 months. Stimulating the housing sector is a proven success formula in rekindling the housing market and underpinning economic growth. This has a large multiplier effect providing jobs and job security and bolstering other sectors such as manufacturing and retail.

ADRIAN RAFERTY

Financial planner



My concern is for the housing grants of \$14000. When the first home owners grant of \$7000 was introduced, it inflated the property prices by the \$7000 and by \$14000 for homes built by first own buyers thanks to the extra \$7000 building grant. So it created a false economy. It sounds really great to get more people buying but if all it's going to do is inflate prices by seven grand then there's no benefit at all.

PETER WYSZENKO

PRD Nationwide director Castle Hills



It's too little too late to be totally honest. We should be mainly concerned with investors rather than first home buyers. They're the ones who can release the land and create the properties that are attractive to first home buyers. There are no properties that are favourable for first home buyers out there at the moment.

JOAN HUGHES

Carers Australia CEO



Those hardest hit by the spiralling costs of living will now have something to look forward to as Christmas approaches. This is an important victory for all those left out of previous proposals. I am pleased to see the Government has listened and is now taking real action.



"This is my fifth act of charity today"

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