



SNIPPETS

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Seniors Enquiry Line

*Linking Seniors with
Community Information*

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Quote for the Month

The happiness of your life depends upon the quality of your thoughts.

— Marcus Aurelius

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Seniors Enquiry Line is an information and referral service for Queensland seniors, proudly sponsored by the Queensland Government Department of Communities and operated by UnitingCare Community.

Pensions when Overseas

If you get a Centrelink payment, you need to notify Centrelink any time you leave Australia. If you are away for over 6 weeks, you also need to let Centrelink know when you return to Australia.

The Age Pension can be paid for the whole time you are overseas, whether you leave Australia temporarily or permanently. However, the amount of pension you receive may change.

After 6 weeks overseas, your Pension Supplement will be reduced. Also, the Clean Energy Supplement (currently \$13.90 per fortnight for singles or \$21 for couples) will stop after 6 weeks.

After 26 weeks overseas, your rate of payment for the pension itself may change, based on the amount of time you lived in Australia as an Australian resident between the age of 16 and age pension age. For people who depart Australia after 1 July 2014, there are changes in how this is calculated: if you have been an Australian resident and lived here less than 35 years (previously 25 years) between age 16 and age pension age, you will receive a pro-rata amount.

For more details go to www.humanservices.gov.au or call 13 23 00. Alternatively, Seniors Enquiry Line may be able to provide some more information on 1300 135 500.

Deeming thresholds changed

The deeming rules assume that your financial assets are earning a certain amount of income, regardless of the income they actually earn. From 1 July 2014, the rates remain the same but the thresholds have been changed.

For financial investments up to \$48,000 (for singles), and up to \$79,600 (for couples), the asset is deemed to earn 2% per annum, while any amount over that is deemed to earn income at 3.5% per annum.



Medicare Forms

Some seniors have been experiencing difficulty in obtaining Medicare claim forms for various reasons, including changed Medicare office locations. Seniors Enquiry Line can post forms to you – phone 1300 135 500.

Government Concessions

In its June budget, the State Government announced there would be reductions in concessions, however this decision was later reversed, so the full level of concessions for all QLD pensioners and Seniors will continue. This is despite the fact that the Federal Government has cut payments to the states for concessions – finance will come from Queensland funds.

If you hold a Queensland Seniors Card, Pensioner Concession Card, a Health Care Card, Gold Card, or Commonwealth Seniors Health Card you are eligible for some concessions. However, each concession or rebate has specific requirements.

Queensland Government concessions include:

- Energy - electricity, reticulated natural gas, energy costs for life support and medical cooling and heating.
- Transport – motor vehicle registration, urban and interstate public transport and some long distance trains, vision impairment travel pass.
- Health – dental care, spectacles, medical aids, taxi subsidy, travel to specialist medical services.
- Leisure - boat registration, fishing permits, entry to national parks. In Brisbane, there are concessions on tickets to the Queensland Art Gallery, Queensland Museum, State Library of Qld and productions of the Queensland Performing Arts Trust.
- Education - some government supported courses and programmes, including adult education courses.
- Rates and water subsidy are only for pensioners.
- Other - fire services discount, smoke alarm subsidy.

Details on eligibility and how to access concessions can change over time: check the website at www.qld.gov.au/concessions for up to the minute information or call the Qld Government on 13 74 68.

There are also **Commonwealth concessions** for some card holders, though not for people who have a Queensland Seniors Card only. Again, there is a need to check eligibility. Commonwealth concessions:

- Health – hearing aids, prescription medicines, Medicare Safety Net, bulk-billed GP appointments (at the doctor's discretion)
- Mail re-direction
- Great Southern Rail services

For more information, phone Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500.



What's On

Naidoc Week – Throughout Queensland

6-13 July : Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and recognise the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and our society. Find activities at www.naidoc.org.au or phone Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500.



Lifeline Mackay Bookfest

10th – 13th July 9:00am – 4:00pm
Pick up some bargains whilst supporting Lifeline's 24-hour Crisis Line and other services across the state.
Venue: Paxton Markets, Riverside
Phone: Lyn Lewis 0417 794 447

Other events on Seniors Enquiry Line's 'Events' pages include: iPad Beginners Tutorial – Caloundra, Seniors Health & Lifestyle Expo – Broadbeach, Avoiding Scams – Cleveland, Overseas Family History – Greenbank, Townsville Gem Show, Seniors Cinema – Robina, Noosa Long Weekend Festival.

Welfare Under Review

The interim report on the review of the welfare system has been released for comment by the Australian Government. Submissions are due 8 August 2014.

The report suggests a simplified structure, but there is some concern about changes suggested e.g. to disability eligibility, categories of welfare assistance, getting people back in the workforce, etc .

To make a submission, or for more information, go to www.dss.gov.au/review-of-australia-s-welfare-system If you don't have access to the internet, but want to make a submission, call Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500.

Oral History of Gay and Lesbian Australia

A group of historians is embarking on an ambitious project to document an oral history of lesbian and gay Australia. They are currently keen to hear from participants who are 60 or over.

Australian Lesbian and Gay Life Stories is collecting five generations of oral histories through a series of interviews by historians at a number of leading Australian universities in collaboration with the National Library of Australia.

For more information, phone 02 9850 9678 or go to www.australianlesbianandgaylifestories.org.au