



SNIPPETS

April 2013 Edition 137

Seniors Enquiry Line
- Linking Seniors with
Community Information

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Quote of the Month

"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."

~ Corrie Ten Boom

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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.

Help around the Home

Are you needing help with cleaning or personal care? Or perhaps with minor repairs around the home, security doors, rails in bathrooms, etc?

If you are a pensioner, you may be entitled to subsidised help. For details of your local service, phone *Seniors Enquiry Line* on 1300 135 500.

Paying Your Electricity Bill

With electricity accounts rising so much, many people are having difficulties paying their bills. If this includes you, some tips are:

1. Talk to your electricity provider: most companies have hardship officers who can help you work out a plan to pay the bill in instalments.
2. Phone the Home Energy Saver Scheme (HESS) Help-line on 1800 007 001. HESS is provided for free, and can help you to: understand your energy bills, work

out whether you are getting the right rebates and assistance, do a budget and sort out your money, find out about easy and affordable ways to use less energy in the home and link to other services that may be able to assist you.

3. If you are a pensioner or Seniors Card holder, check that you are getting the state government rebate.

4. Contact Financial First Aid on 1800 007 007 – they can put you in touch with financial counsellors who offer a free, confidential service to help you sort out your money problems. They may help you approach your utility bill provider to work out a payment plan, or apply for vouchers.

5. Centrelink advance payment: If you are on a pension you may be able to get an advance payment from Centrelink which is paid back each fortnight. Of course, this may help in a one-off situation, but is not a way to deal with regular bills.



What's On

GOLD Program – Brisbane

Growing Older and Living Dangerously (GOLD) is a Brisbane City Council program of events and activities for residents 50 years of age and over. There is a great range of free or low cost activities.

To obtain a copy of the program for the next 6 months, go to your library or phone **Seniors Enquiry Line** on 1300 135 500.

Lifeline Bookfest - Caboolture

Date: 6th - 8th April 8:30am – 4:00pm

Description: The Bookfest will have around 130 tables stocked to the brim with over 40 tonnes of hardcovers and paperbacks of all genres.

Venue: Centenary Lakes Indoor Basketball Courts, Morayfield Rd, Caboolture

Phone: 0438 150 702

Geology of the Gold Coast - Nerang

Date: 27th April
9am to 1:30 pm

Description: This session covers the geological processes that have shaped the Gold Coast region, the different rock types and their effects, and identifying rock samples. Bookings essential. Cost: Free.

Venue: Nerang – phone for details

Phone: 07 5581 1521



Magnetic Island Heritage Tour



Date: 14th April
9.30am to 12.15pm

Description: Enjoy a bus tour of Magnetic Island about its heritage. Morning tea provided. Bookings essential. Cost: \$15

Venue: Magnetic Island
Phone: 07 4778 5606 or
0488 050 145

Other events on Seniors Enquiry Line's

'Events' pages include: QLD Council of Garden Clubs Show at Mt Coot-tha, Allora & District Historical Display, Nutrition in a Hurry at Noosa, Afternoon Melodies: Townsville Choral Society - Ayr, Red Cross Wills Day in Redcliffe, Dementia Info Course for Family Carers – Sunshine Coast.



Private Health Insurance - Increases and Choices

Private health insurance premiums will increase by an average of 5.6% from April 2013. Your health fund is required to notify you in writing, and you will receive updated policy information with more information about the change.

If you feel that you cannot afford the increased premium, there are still a number of options for you to maintain private health insurance. Note: (You may need to maintain hospital cover if you wish to preserve your Lifetime Health Cover status and to avoid the Medicare Levy Surcharge.)

It is worth shopping around, as your current health insurer or another insurer may be able to offer you a cheaper policy that still meets your needs.

There are some organisations which can help you compare health insurance options, free of charge. Information on health insurance and comparisons can be found at: www.privatehealthinsurance.gov.au or by ringing 1300 737 299. This is an Australian government service.

You can also check out *iSelect* at www.iselect.com.au or phone 13 19 20, or *Choosi* at www.choosi.com.au or phone 1300 884 384. These companies will take details of your requirements, and compare health insurance policies from a range of insurers.

Firearms Amnesty

New tough laws have been brought in for people caught using firearms illegally. However there is a Queensland Government state-wide amnesty from prosecution for the surrender and registration of weapons and unregistered firearms during the amnesty period which finishes on 30 April.

For more information, call the Firearms Amnesty Information Line on 1300 833 548, or e-mail firearmsamnesty@police.qld.gov.au

Important - SE Qld Digital TV

On **28 May 2013**, Brisbane, Ipswich, the Gold Coast, and the Sunshine Coast as far north as Gympie will switch off their analog TV signals and switch to digital-only TV.

How will this affect you? To keep receiving free-to-air TV after the switchover you need a television that is capable of receiving digital signals. If you're not sure if your TV is suitable, check if you can see channels ABC2 or SBS TWO. If you can, you are already watching digital TV and don't need to upgrade.

If you can't see these channels, your main options are:

1. Get a digital set top box to convert your existing analog TV
2. Upgrade to a television with an in-built digital tuner.



Is there any help to change over? If you receive a full pension, you may be eligible for help. Phone Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500 to check eligibility.

For further information, contact the Digital Ready Information Line on 1800 20 10 13 or go to www.digitalready.gov.au

Flu Vaccine

Free influenza vaccine is available: for people over 65 years of age, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 15 years or older, and for anyone who has a medical condition predisposing to severe influenza, such as cardiac disease or chronic respiratory disease.

Although the vaccine is free, you may need to pay for a visit to your GP to have the injection.

Grants to Support Volunteers



Volunteer Grants from the Australian Government' are now open, with \$16 million available to community organisations around the country.

Organisations can apply for grants of between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

These grants can be used to buy much needed equipment or to assist volunteers with fuel costs, training courses and compulsory background checks.

Applications for Volunteer Grants are open until 24th April. To apply, go to www.fahcsia.gov.au or phone the Volunteer Grants Hotline on 1800 183 374.

Bereavement Register

The Australian Bereavement Register is a free service that aims to put a stop to telemarketing calls and mail being sent to a deceased person. It is available to anyone who has lost a loved one, and for organisations providing bereavement services wanting to ease the burden on their clients.

Direct marketing companies pay to check their mailing list against the Bereavement Register. If you continue to receive unsolicited addressed mail more than two months after providing details to the register, the register's staff can contact the senders directly on your behalf.

For more information, go to www.tabr.com.au or phone 1300 887 914.



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