



SNIPPETS

January/February 2015 Edition 157

Seniors Enquiry Line
*Linking Seniors with
Community Information*

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Quote for the Month

On donating 90% of his salary to charity:

"I have a way of life that I don't change just because I am a president. I earn more than I need, even if it's not enough for others. For me, it is no sacrifice, it's a duty." ~ Uruguayan President, José Mujica.

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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.

Centrelink Changes

From 1 January 2015, the Energy Supplement, formerly the Clean Energy Supplement, will be paid at the rate paid on 20 September 2014, with the rate of payment fixed for future payments.

Overseas travel: You no longer need to let Centrelink know if you are travelling overseas for under 6 weeks. Non-pensioners who have a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC), need to tell Centrelink of overseas travel of more than 6 weeks, but they are able to be overseas for up to 19 weeks before their CSHC card is cancelled.

From 1 January 2015, CSHC holders will have the deemed income from any new account-based income streams used to assess their eligibility for a CSHC.

Disability Pension Changes

Travelling overseas: As of 1 January 2015, people on the Disability Support Pension (DSP) can now only be out of the country for four weeks in a 12-month period before their payment is affected.

Certain circumstances may change this: e.g. an acute family crisis, or having a permanent and severe impairment with no future work capacity. Contact Human Services before planning any travel over the 4 week limit.

New DSP claims: From 1 July 2015, there will be a different process for all new DSP claims. Instead of a Treating Doctor Report, claimants will need to provide medical evidence, they will then be referred for a Job Capacity Assessment, followed possibly by an assessment by a government-contracted doctor, after which the department will make the final decision on the claim.



For further details, go to www.humanservices.gov.au or phone 13 27 17.

What's On

Ageing Stronger, Active Longer - Goodna

Date: 20th February 9.00am - 12.30pm

A 6 week program to learn about diet and experience a variety of low impact activities. Free, but please register.

Venue: Frank McGreevy Function Centre, Brisbane Terrace, Goodna

Web: <http://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/community/seniors>

Phone: 07 3810 6646

Melon Festival – Chinchilla

Date: 12th – 15th February all day

A celebration of all things melon with main events on Sat 14th February – a street parade, stalls, lots of melon events including melon skiing. Free Entry.

Venue: Heeny Street, Chinchilla

Web: www.melonfest.com.au

Phone: 07 4679 4491

iPad for New Users – Cairns

Date: 19th February 10:00am – 12:00pm

Bring along your Apple tablet and learn the basics. Phone for more information and bookings.

Venue: City Library Meeting Room

Web: www.cairns.qld.gov.au/library

Phone: 07 4044 3730

Other events on Seniors Enquiry Line's 'Events' pages include: LGBTI Over 50's Expo – Southport, Australian Army Fly-in Exhibition – Oakey, Chinese New Year – Bundaberg & Brisbane & Cairns, Computers for Beginners – Maroochydore, Antique & Collectors Fair & Exhibition – Toowoomba, Artist Market – Townsville, The Hand Made Market Expo – Ipswich.

Medicare Rebates

The Federal Government had planned to introduce reduced rebates to doctors for consultations under 10 minutes from 19 January 2015. However this has now been scrapped, meaning that patients will not need to pay the original \$20 difference.



The Government remains committed to a GP co-payment, though new details have yet to be decided.

Seniors Week Funding

Community organisations and local councils can apply for up to \$1000 to assist in holding Seniors Week events held from 15 to 23 August 2015. Applications open on 2 February, and close 27 March. For more details, go to www.cotaqld.org.au or call 1300 738 348.

Water Subsidy



If you currently receive a Water Subsidy, your water retailer may have written to you requesting you provide your written consent to undertake a verification process of your eligibility with Centrelink, Department of Veteran Affairs or other

Australian or State government departments.

Verification checks are a standard procedure and ensure that those eligible to receive this concession continue to receive it. This is a legitimate request as the government departments cannot verify eligibility without your consent.

If you haven't returned the consent form, you should receive another letter from your water retailer. If you wish to continue to receive the subsidy, then you will need to respond to one of these letters.

For more information please contact your water retailer.

EWOQ Warns Electricity Consumers

EWOQ, the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland, warns electricity consumers to be wary of unscrupulous credit fix agencies.

As the cost of living increases, more electricity consumers are having difficulty paying their electricity bill and are being credit listed for the debt, sometimes by mistake.

Often, customers who are credit listed turn to credit repair agents to sort it out, often paying for a service they can access themselves for free.

Queenslanders are reminded that the role of an Ombudsman is to act independently to resolve disputes, and that services are free of charge. If you are having credit issues with your electricity, gas or water provider, speak to the provider first and try to resolve the issue. If you are not satisfied, contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland – go to www.ewoq.com.au or call 1800 662 837.

If you need help with paying electricity bills, phone Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500 for advice about the Home Energy Emergency Assistance Scheme.

