



SNIPPETS

October 2014 Edition 154

Seniors Enquiry Line

*Linking Seniors with
Community Information*

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Quote for the Month

Age does not protect you from love. But love, to some extent, protects you from age.

~ Anais Nin

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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.



Seniors Info Chat

Seniors Info Chat is a new service provided by Seniors Enquiry Line that provides regular updates to Seniors across Queensland. During a 6 month trial period, our friendly staff will call seniors about current scams, government and community announcements or events in their area.

Each call will generally cover one or two items of interest to Seniors. To register for Seniors Info Chat, call 1300 135 500.

Centrelink: Pension Increases

Centrelink payment rates are updated on 20th March and 20th September each year. From 20th Sept 2014, single age pensioners will receive an increase of up to \$11.50 a fortnight, while age pensioner couples will receive up to \$17.40 extra a fortnight. This brings the total for people on the maximum pension to \$854.30 a fortnight for singles, and \$1,288.00 a fortnight for couples.

There will also be increases for payments such as: Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment, Newstart Allowance, Widow Allowance, Partner Allowance and Sickness Allowance.



Celebrate Grandparents Day Sunday 26 October 2014

Grandparents Day is a chance for grandchildren, children & the community to thank grandparents for their love and support, and recognise the very significant contribution grandparents make.

Ideas for what to do on Grandparents Day can be found at www.communities.qld.gov.au (type 'grandparents' in the **Search** box).

Free posters, stickers and postcards will be available shortly. To order these resources, check the website, or phone Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500.

What's On

Brisbane Open House

11th - 12th October

89 selected buildings are opened for the public, with free guided and self-guided tours.

Venue: Buildings throughout Brisbane.

Web: www.brisbaneopenhouse.com.au

Phone: 07 32371914

Scarecrow Festival – Mount Tamborine

17th -19th October 4:00pm – 10:00pm

Check out the Scarecrow Discovery Trail, as well as entertainment, poetry, arts & crafts and more.

Venue: Main Street, North Tamborine

Web: www.tamborinemtnc.org.au

Phone: 07 5545 3595

Other events on Seniors Enquiry Line's 'Events' pages include: Lighthouse Festival – Burnett Heads, Faulty Towers: The Dining Experience – Mackay; Gold Rush Festival – Gympie; Crows Nest Festival; Reef Feast – Palm Cove; Gem of the Coral Coast Festival – Bowen; Diwali Festival – Brisbane; Renaissance Spring Fair – Victoria Point.

Australia Post Price Changes

On 6th October, price changes will take effect for some Australia Post products and services, including: Mail Redirection & Mail Hold, Registered Post, and selected international letter and parcel services.

There will be no price change to the basic domestic letter rate (70 cents, or 60 cents with a MyPost concession card), or seasonal greeting cards.

Note: Redirection of a **deceased** persons' mail is provided at no charge for up to 1 year. You may be required to provide relevant documentation such as a letter of probate or administration.



No More Registration Stickers

From October 1st, car registration stickers on windscreens can be removed as there is no longer any need to show a label, bringing Queensland in line with other states.

Motorists will still receive their registration notice in the mail, along with payment information. Unregistered vehicles will continue to be dealt with through current enforcement and more Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras.

If you want to check the registration of your vehicle, download the QLD Rego Check app for free from iTunes or Google Play, or go to www.qld.gov.au/checkreg or phone 13 23 80.

Commonwealth Seniors Health Card

Those people who are of Age Pension age, but who do not qualify for an Age Pension, may be entitled to the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) if they meet residence requirements and an income test.

The Commonwealth Government has recently indexed the income thresholds for the card, so that from September 2014, self-funded retirees are eligible if their annual adjusted taxable income is less than \$51,500 (for a single person) or less than \$82,400 (for a couple, combined). However, from 1st January 2015, income from new account based superannuation income streams will be included in the CSHC income test.

Around 20 September 2014, holders of a CSHC should have received the Seniors Supplement, a quarterly payment of about \$224 (single) or \$338 (couple, combined). This may be the last Seniors Supplement paid, subject to the passage of legislation in Parliament.

CSHC holders will continue to receive the Energy Supplement (previously the Clean Energy supplement) which is paid quarterly. This has increased to \$366.60 a year (single), or \$551.20 (couple combined).

For more information, contact Centrelink on 13 23 00.

Changes to Travel Agents Laws

Travel agents no longer need licences in Queensland and most parts of Australia, since deregulation occurred on 1st July 2014. This means that consumers have the same rights whether they book their holidays through an agent, online, or a combination of both.

The Australian Consumer Law (ACL) is now the main legislation governing travel agent conduct. The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has developed a new accreditation scheme which will help consumers identify travel businesses committed to certain professional standards.

In August, consumer protection agencies launched the 'Pack Some Peace of Mind' campaign to inform Australians about the changes, and provide tips on how to book holidays and ensure things go smoothly.

For more information, go to <http://packsomepeaceofmind.gov.au/> or call Seniors Enquiry Line on 1300 135 500.

