



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Main Committee

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Budget

SPEECH

Wednesday, 3 June 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker Sidebottom, Sid, MP	Question No.

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (9.39 am)—Good morning, colleagues. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify a couple of points which seem to have caused a bit of confusion in my electorate since the federal budget was handed down on 13 May, in particular surrounding the increase to the pension and the changes to supplementary payments. For the record, from 20 September this year the single pension will rise by \$32.49 per week for singles and \$10.14 for pensioner couples (combined). These increases are independent of any CPI increases—CPI increases will come on top of this.

This rise is not just for aged pensioners either, as the Liberals had wanted; it certainly includes age pensioners, but it is also for disability support pensioners, veterans service pensioners, war widows pensioners, wife pensioners, widow B pensioners plus those who received carer payment, income support supplement and bereavement allowance.

The Rudd government has also acknowledged the very special role our carers play in the lives of those they care for, and often with very little recognition. So the Rudd government will introduce a permanent carer supplement of \$600 per year for carer payment recipients and an additional \$600 per year for carer allowance recipients for each eligible person in their care. The first payment will be made on or before 30 June 2009, with following annual payments from 1 July 2010.

Pensioners will also receive their additional pension payments in a new fortnightly pension supplement. From 20 September, the existing goods and services tax supplement, pharmaceutical allowance, utilities allowance, telephone allowance and increase to the new pensions supplement will all be included in the new fortnightly pension supplement. This change will make keeping track of income much easier for our pensioners as they save to pay utility bills and the like. Pensioners who would prefer to receive these additional payments in lump sum can opt to receive half the pension supplement quarterly from 1 July 2010.

These increases are just another way the Rudd government has listened to and responded to the needs of our pensioners. Unlike those opposite, who totally ignored pensioners during their 11 years in government and only seemed to discover them in their hollow promise to increase the pension in opposition, we have delivered for all pensioners.