



COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Founded 1931. Celebrating 75 years of service in 2006.
Serving pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees.

Consumer Protection Awards – 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005

9 May 2006

Pensioners miss out in surplus Budget

“Pensioners and low-income retirees do not benefit at all from a 2006 Federal Budget that shows a record surplus”, said Bob Jay, State Secretary of the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association.

“The Federal Government has given tax relief all around, but has forgotten about pensioners, whose meagre income is continually being eroded. They get absolutely nothing at all.

“In the September 2005 and January 2006 quarters, the purchasing power of the pension in NSW has gone down by 1 per cent in real terms, or about \$130 per year for a single pensioner.

“Meanwhile, the Government keeps throwing money at a US-style health system that discriminates against the have-nots.

“In excess of \$3 billion in health fund rebates and \$10 billion in premiums, if redirected, would double the Medicare budget and achieve universal equitable access to health services.

“Instead, the Medicare safety net allows the rich to get more money out of it than the poor.

“Australia has a record Budget surplus but no money to address the worsening national crisis in public dental health created through the abolition of the Commonwealth Dental Health Program ten years ago by the current Government.

“The Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme (PBS) continues to be under enormous pressure as an effective way of delivering affordable medicines to pensioners.

“As of 1 January 2006, pensioners must reach 54 rather than 52 scripts to receive the benefit of the PBS safety net.

“The Pharmaceutical Allowance was originally set at a level where pensioners could make two PBS co-payments a fortnight. Increases in the co-payment mean that the Pharmaceutical Allowance now covers less than one-and-a-quarter script: a reduction of 75 per cent in real terms.

“The phasing out of the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement is a severe blow to affordable public housing in NSW, where eligibility has now shrunk to the very old and the severely disabled.

“Meanwhile residential aged care remains a cowboy industry. Operators are not accountable for the standard of care they provide with the \$5.2 billion of taxpayer money that largely funds their industry.

“Here again, it’s the age pensioners that bear the brunt of the lack of effective regulation of an industry that makes the news for all the wrong reasons: physical, mental and sexual abuse and just plain sub-standard care.

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