



Hon. Andrew Fraser MP
Member for Mount Coot-tha



Treasurer

3 June 2008

Budget funds initiatives to give pensioners a hand

Queensland's older residents and pensioners have received a helping hand in today's State Budget with an increase in the electricity rebate and a new tax break for aged care homes.

Treasurer Andrew Fraser said the budget he delivered today deliberately targeted the state's retirees and pensioners to provide relief for their own budgets.

"Price rises hit those on fixed incomes hardest. It's no secret that many of our pensioners and older residents are doing it tough and through the budget process, the government was determined to provide some relief where it matters most – in the hip pocket," Mr Fraser said.

"Electricity prices around Australia have been rising and our policy has been to increase the rebate by the same rate as the electricity index increase.

"With the latest price increases set at 5.3 per cent, we know that every dollar counts.

"Today's Budget funds a \$20 increase in the rebate up to \$165 per annum – a 13.8 per cent increase in the rebate payable at a cost of \$10.7 million."

Mr Fraser also announced that land tax would be abolished on aged care facilities, with legislation in place by 1 January.

"This measure will ensure lower operating costs for aged care homes.

"We are also ensuring tax concessions extend to seniors purchasing homes in retirement villages under new leasing arrangements, and providing relief from land tax arrangements that can penalise older people forced to leave their homes due to illness.

Mr Fraser said the tax reforms for older Queenslanders are valued at \$20 million across the forward estimates.

The Budget also provides funds for the new SEQ Pensioner Water Subsidy Scheme to assist with rising prices in the south-east corner due to commence on 1 July 2008 with a rebate of \$40, rising to \$70 and \$100 in subsequent years.

The funds for the Reticulated Gas Rebate Scheme announced by the Government since the last Budget are also included.

Summary of concessions available for pensioners:

- An increase in the electricity rebate scheme by \$20 to \$165 a year to eligible concession card holders

- A package of measures to reduce housing costs for older persons. The measures include providing a land tax exemption for aged care facilities, which will complement the existing exemption for retirement villages as well as a new exemption from land tax in cases of illness which requires leaving the family home
- The SEQ Pensioner Water Subsidy Scheme, to be phased in over three years to lessen the impact of water price increases, providing subsidies of \$40 in 2008-09, \$70 in 2009-10 and \$100 from 2010-11
- The Reticulated Natural Gas Rebate Scheme offers rebates on the cost of natural gas supplies to the homes of eligible persons at \$57.64 a person amounting to \$5.8 million in 2008-09
- Continuation of the Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme of up to \$180 per annum
- The transfer duty homebuyer concession will be extended to help residents of retirement villages who adopt lease and sub-lease occupancy arrangements
- 50 per cent discounts on motor vehicle and boat registration are also offered to pensioners and seniors – saving \$109 on registering a four cylinder car

Media Contact

Chris Taylor
Renee Mickelburgh

0419 710 874
0458 357 539