

**PRIME MINISTER**  
**TREASURER**  
**MINISTER FOR FAMILIES**

**\$4.8 BILLION DOWN PAYMENT TO HELP PENSIONERS,  
SENIORS, AND CARERS**

The Rudd Government will deliver a \$4.8 billion down payment to Australia's four million pensioners, carers, seniors and veterans - providing them with immediate financial help in the lead up to comprehensive reform of the pension system.

This decisive action is part of the Rudd Government's \$10.4 billion Economic Security Strategy to boost the Australian economy and support pensioners and families during the global financial crisis.

The \$4.8 billion down payment will be made available through a lump sum payment of \$1,400 to singles and \$2,100 to couples, which will benefit:

- Age Pensioners;
- Disability Support Pensioners;
- Carer Payment recipients;
- Wife and Widow B Pensioners; Partner, Widow and Bereavement Allowees;
- Veterans Affairs Service Pensioners;
- Veterans Income Support Supplement recipients;
- Veterans Affairs Gold Card holders eligible for Seniors Concession Allowance;
- Those of age pension age who receive Parenting Payment, Special Benefit, or Austudy; and
- Eligible Self Funded retirees holding a Commonwealth Senior Health Card (CSHC)

People who are receiving Carer Allowance will also receive \$1,000 for each eligible person being cared for.

All payments will be made automatically through Centrelink and the Department of Veterans Affairs in the fortnight beginning 8 December 2008.

Payments are intended to provide additional support in the nine months between now and when long-term reforms are introduced from the beginning of the next financial year.

The global financial crisis is placing increasing pressure on budgets already stretched by the rising cost of living.

That is why we are taking decisive action to provide support to pensioners while reforms to the pension system are being finalised.

The Government will not pit pensioner groups against each other and we will not exclude two million carers, people with a disability and married pensioner couples from this payment ahead of longer term reform.

These payments recognise the additional costs single pensioners face relative to couples.

For the first time, lump sum payments are being extended to include Disability Support Pensioners.

The Government is reforming the pension system to prepare Australia for the challenges of the future and we are committed to getting it right for the long term.

Long term pension reform will be delivered in the 2009-10 Budget context.

The \$4.8 billion package builds on the \$7.5 billion in support provided in the Government's first budget, bringing new spending on pensioners, seniors and carers to \$12.3 billion.

The Government's Economic Security Strategy also includes help for self-funded retirees, who are eligible for a Seniors Concession Allowance or hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

They will receive a payment of \$1,400 if they are single or \$2,100 for couples.

The Government is closely monitoring the global financial crisis and its impact on pensioners.

In the last week financial markets experienced a significant fall in share values, resulting in substantial reductions in the value of pensioner financial assets.

The Government has asked Centrelink to quickly update their system with the current value of any investments, including shares, that pensioners might hold.

This will ensure that pension payments are based on the most up-to-date asset values available.

Payments will be non taxable and not included for income testing purposes.

**CANBERRA**  
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