

## **GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION MUST ANSWER THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF OLDER AUSTRALIANS**

“It was disappointing in the extreme that the only mention of older Australians during the debate between John Howard and Kevin Rudd was the PM’s brief comment about a long term plan for pensioners” states Mrs. Bettine Heathcote, Chair of the National Policy Council – COTA Over 50s.

“Finally, when Mr. Howard does address the plight of older Australians by saying: ‘There’s been no group in the country that is feeling a greater degree of financial pressure than pensioners’, his solution is to offer, in real terms, \$8:00 per week.

“Whilst any additional assistance to older Australians is welcomed the fact remains that there are many older people – both self-funded retirees and pensioners who are still doing it very tough.

“On the last day Parliament sat, Senator Bob Brown, Leader of the Greens proposed a \$30:00per week increase for pensioners. The proposal was voted against by both the Coalition and Labor.

“If Mr. Howard acknowledges the financial plight of pensions, surely he realizes that \$8:00per week is not realistic.

“As a first step COTA Over 50s is calling upon the Government to increase the single rate of pension to 65% of the couple rate. In real terms this amounts to an increase of \$25.00 per week. It is the single pensioner who is most affected by the current rate of \$269.00 per week and this is where the Government should be focusing attention.

“Secondly, COTA Over 50s is calling for an urgent review of the adequacy of the aged pension with an immediate interim increase of \$1,000 per annum to continue until the review outcomes are implemented”.

“It is interesting to note that in1947 the then PM, the Hon Ben Chifley, legislated to prevent poverty amongst future older Australians and imposed a 7.5% levy on wages to pay for it. Our senior citizens are asking “Where has it gone?

For more information:

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Copies of the report are available on [www.cotaover50s.org.au](http://www.cotaover50s.org.au)