



NEWS RELEASE

Sharon Bird MP
Federal Member for Cunningham

Wollongong's pensioners to benefit from increased financial support

Seniors, carers and people with a disability in Wollongong will receive increased financial support from March 20 following the introduction of legislation into the House of Representatives, Federal Member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird, said today.

“Under the legislation, the Utilities Allowance would increase from \$107.20 a year to \$500 a year.

“The increased allowance will be paid to age pensioners, and extended to recipients of the Carer Payment, Disability Support Pension, Widow B Pension, Wife Pension and Bereavement Allowance”, Ms Bird said.

She said that veterans and their partners receiving the invalidity service pension, partner service pension or an income support supplement will also receive the Utilities Allowance for the first time.

“The Utilities Allowance will be paid in quarterly instalments to meet quarterly utilities bills”, Ms Bird said.

The legislation also increases the Seniors Concession Allowance and Telephone Allowance.

“The Seniors Concession Allowance will rise from \$218 a year to \$500 a year and will also be paid quarterly, which will assist self-funded retirees in my electorate.

“The Telephone Allowance will rise from \$88 a year to \$132 a year for around one million veterans, aged pension income support recipients, Commonwealth Seniors Health card holders, recipients of the Carer Payment and Disability Support Pension who have a home internet connection”, Ms Bird said.

She said Telephone Allowance recipients must give Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs details of their home internet service provider before March 20 to be paid the increased allowance on time.

“All allowance increases will be paid in the fortnight commencing March 20 and all eligible recipients will be paid by April 3, 2008.

“The Government is meeting its commitment to help make ends meet for aged pensioners, carers and people with a disability in Wollongong”, Ms Bird said.

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