



**Gold Coast Office, - 5<sup>th</sup> floor  
12 Short Street,  
Southport Qld 4215**

**\*\*\*Latest News from Veterans' Affairs - July 2008\*\*\***



Payment Summaries

If you receive a taxable pension (eg. Age Service Pension, ISS) you will be sent a 2007/2008 Payment Summary during July.

Medicare Levy Exemption

If you are a Gold Card holder and you receive a taxable pension, your payment summary will indicate the number of days you were eligible for an exemption of the medicare levy.

However, if you are a Gold Card holder and you *don't* receive a taxable pension (eg. War Widows' Pension, Invalidity Service Pension, Disability Pension) you will receive a Medicare Levy Exemption Certificate instead.

Be aware! If you are receiving taxable payments from a super fund, you may be paying the medicare levy even though you are exempt. If this is the case, contact the fund to advise that you are exempt and provide them with a copy of your payment summary or exemption certificate.



*Do you have a taxation query?*

DVA staff are not trained in tax matters and are not in a position to provide advice on the lodgement of tax returns.

Should you have any tax-related queries, it is recommended that you call the Australian Tax Office on 13 28 61.

**1 July 2008 changes**

**Increase in Income Free Area, Asset Value Limits and Deeming Thresholds**

On 1 July 2008, the Income Free Area, Asset Value Limits and Deeming thresholds will rise. Basically this means that you may have more income and/or assets before your income support payment is affected. The new rates are as follows:

<b>Income Free Area</b>	Single	Couple
Service/Age Pension	\$138	\$240
Income Support S'ment	\$1097	\$1708
<b>Asset Value Limits</b>	Single	Couple
Service/Age Pension Homeowner	\$171,750	\$243,500
Non-homeowner	\$296,250	\$368,000
Income Support Supplement		
Homeowner	\$427,500	\$635,000
Non-homeowner	\$552,000	\$759,500
<b>Deeming Thresholds</b>		
Single Pensioners	first \$41,000	4%
	Thereafter	6%
Couple pensioners	first \$68,200	4%
	Thereafter	6%



**Increase in Travelling Allowances**

For those that have their medical treatment provided by DVA, allowances for travel by private motor vehicle will increase from 27.4 cents per km to 28.6 cents per km. This equates to a reimbursement of \$14.30 (previously \$13.70) for a 50 km return trip.

## 1 July 2008 changes (cont)...

### Partner Service Pension – Changes to eligibility age

For all new Partner Service Pension claims lodged on or after 1 July 2008, the age requirement for partners will increase from 50 years to the veteran pension age, unless the claimant has a dependant child or is the partner of a special rate (TPI) veteran.

*What is veteran pension age?*

To put it simply, veteran pension age is five years earlier than social security pension age. For example:

- Veteran pension age for males is 60 years.
- Veteran pension age for females is as follows:

Born < 1/1/1950	Eligible now
1/1/1950 – 31/12/1950	58 years 6 months
1/1/1951 – 30/6/1952	59 years
1/7/1952 – 31/12/1953	59 years 6 months
Born > 31/12/1953	60 years

Partners currently receiving service pension will not be affected by the change. However, if their pension is cancelled for any reason, any subsequent claim will need to meet the new criteria.

If you are not eligible for partner service pension, you may be eligible for income support payments from Centrelink such as Newstart, Disability Support Pension or Partner Allowance. Call Centrelink on 132850 (employment services) or 132717 (Disability, Sickness or Carers) for further information regarding these payments.

### Automatic War Widows' Pension for dependants of INT and TSR veterans

From 1 July 2008, The legislation has been amended to allow the automatic granting of War Widow(er)'s Pension and Orphan's Pension to dependants of Temporary Special Rate (TSR) and Intermediate Rate (INT) pensioners.

Ministerial approval has also been given to the extension of official commemoration eligibility to veterans in receipt of TSR and INT disability pension at the time of their death.

## Income Support Supplement – Changes to eligibility age

Income support Supplement (ISS) is available to war widows and widowers which is a means-tested 'top-up' of the war widows pension. Previously claimants have had to be veterans pension age or have had to be permanently incapacitated to work.

From 1 July 2008, war widows and widowers will no longer have to meet an age criteria to be eligible for ISS. However, if the claimant has stopped work due to incapacity, it is beneficial to claim for ISS (Invalidity) so the payment will remain untaxable until social security pension age.

A letter and claim form were recently sent to all war widows under pension age advising them of the changes. If this applies to you, please complete the claim form and lodge it at the VAN office or send directly to Brisbane State Office.

## Allowance time again!!

The pension for **3 July 2008** included the payment of the following allowances (where applicable):

- Utilities Allowance
- Telephone Allowance
- Seniors Concession Allowance

Please note that the above allowances are paid quarterly with the new instalment due on payday 25 September 2008.

As a budget initiative, the **Senior Australian Bonus** was paid to eligible pensioners on *18 June 2008*. **Carer Bonus** was paid to eligible carers on *23/24 June 2008*. Please contact the VAN office if you think you may be eligible and you have not received either bonus .

*Have you visited your local VAN  
Office lately?*

Did you know that your local VAN office has a comprehensive range of brochures and information about local community support services, as well as information about DVA pensions and benefits? If you have any queries, contact our friendly staff, it is quite likely we will have the answer!

**Phone: 07-5630 0203 or 1300 55 1918**

*We look forward to your visit!*

**Nikki, Pat, Bronwyn and Jenny**