



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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GOVERNMENT DELIVERS ON ELECTION PROMISES TO VETERANS

A number of key election commitments will take effect from today, delivering improved entitlements to around 310,000 of Australia's veterans and their dependants.

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, said the legislative changes demonstrated the Government was serious about implementing its election commitments to veterans and their families.

The measures deliver a number of increased payments to veterans, war widows, widowers and their dependants.

As a result of legislation that has recently passed the Parliament, the Government will now:

- Automatically grant war widows pensions to those surviving partners of temporary special rate or intermediate rate pensioners;
- Provide the income support supplement of up to \$163.20 a fortnight to eligible war widows and widowers who are under 58 years old; and
- Make bereavement payments to single recipients of the special rate and extreme disablement adjustment disability pensions who die in indigent circumstances.

Two-hundred-and-seventy-thousand veterans are also about to receive the second quarterly instalment of increased Utilities Allowance, worth \$125 per family. In addition 41,000 (mainly war widows) are about to be paid the second instalment of Senior Concession Allowance of \$125.

Seventy-six thousand eligible veterans and carers will also benefit from an increase in the telephone allowance from \$88 to \$132 annually to help meet the cost of an internet connection.

Other initiatives that were part of the 2008-09 budget, and were paid in the last week, include a \$500 bonus to 310,000 eligible veterans and bonuses of between \$600 and \$1000 to 17,000 carers.

These amounts are in addition to the fairer indexation system and the 5 per cent increase to the base of all pensions at the General Rate that was implemented in March 2008.

"These changes are a result of the Government taking action to meet veterans' concerns and delivering on our commitments," Mr Griffin said.

Mr Griffin said the Government would continue to consult with the ex-service community to deliver fair outcomes that improved the lives of veterans and their dependants.

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