



# Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

VA084

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## NEW RATES BOOST VETERAN PENSIONS

More than 320,000 members of the veteran community are set to benefit from new pension rates from this Sunday, 20 September, announced the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin.

Mr Griffin said the new pension rates are part of the Australian Government's Secure and Sustainable Pension Reforms.

"The increases to income support pensions, combined with the new Pension Supplement and improved indexation, mean maximum rate single service pensioners will receive \$671.90 a fortnight and war widows/ers with income support supplement will receive \$881.50 a fortnight," Mr Griffin said.

"The new maximum rate for couples is \$1,013.00 fortnightly, or \$506.50 each.

"Our reforms are aimed at giving those pensioners who rely on income support a fair go now, when they need it most, while improving the long term sustainability of the pension system.

"The Government is also simplifying the complex system of allowances and paying new supplements fortnightly," Mr Griffin said.

Indexation of income support has improved as the new Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index (PBLCI) more realistically reflects the rise in cost of goods and services for pensioners. In the six months to June 2009, the PBLCI rose by 1.0 per cent. The Consumer Price Index rose by 0.6 per cent over the same period.

There is also a Work Bonus rewarding those of pension age who choose to continue to work.

"A letter is being sent to all pension recipients explaining how the pension reforms affect their personal circumstances. I encourage Veterans' Affairs pensioners to read their letter carefully," Mr Griffin said.

"If any member of the veteran community has questions about their pension changes after reading the letter, they can contact my Department's special Pension Review team on 1300 307 901 or via [www.dva.gov.au/pensionreform](http://www.dva.gov.au/pensionreform)."

NB: Table of rates follows

**Media inquiries only: Sasha Nimmo 0437 863 109**

<b>Pension</b>	<b>Old fortnightly rate</b>	<b>New fortnightly rate</b>
Special Rate (TPI) Pension/ MRCA Special Rate Disability Pension	\$1,011.90	\$1,022.10
Extreme Disablement Adjustment	\$558.50	\$564.10
100 per cent General Rate of Disability Pension	\$359.50	\$363.10
Intermediate Rate Disability Pension	\$686.60	\$693.50
Service Pension – single	\$569.80	\$671.90*
Service Pension – couples	\$951.80 couple \$475.90 each	\$1,013.00* couple \$506.50* each
War Widows/ers Pension	\$607.00	\$679.00
Income Support Supplement	\$170.20	\$202.50*

\*New rates include new supplements which replace allowances previously paid quarterly. The new Pension Supplement replaces, and incorporates the full value of the Utilities Allowance, Telephone Allowance (at the higher internet rate), the GST Supplement and the Pharmaceutical Allowance.

Pension increases apply from 20 September, paid from pension day 24 September. The 24 September pension payment will include the last quarterly payment of Telephone Allowance and Utilities Allowance. The first full payment of the new rates will be on 8 October.

Other reforms include a change to the income test taper rate. Any pensioner who would otherwise have had a reduction in their payment because of the changes will go onto a 'transitional rate' and will still receive a modest increase. They will stay on the transitional rate until they receive a higher payment under the new rules.

The minimum pension increase is \$20.20, however, with an increase of around 35 per cent in the value of the stock market since March 2009, there may be an erosion of the amount for some people.

The VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **1800 011 046**.

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