

**TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE
SUPERANNUANTS
SUPER-NEWS**

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The Newsletter for and by TASS members

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**LAUNCESTON GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY 15TH MAY
MT.PLEASANT OFFICES
WESTBURY ROAD
STARTING AT 1.00PM
GUEST SPEAKER from RBF
Further details are given on page 2**

EDITORIAL

One or two of our members may have noticed that our Federal politicians are behaving as if an election is due to be held this year. This is the most sensitive time to tell politicians just what is wrong and what must be done to fix problems. Politicians have been known to listen and even recommend action. This is especially so when the outcome in a particular electorate could be close. The time is right to have your say! In earlier editions of S.N. mention has often been made of the significant changes that will reduce the tax to be paid on Superannuation pensions. The Commonwealth Bill has been passed and the changes will take place. Although the term used by the Federal government is "A Simpler Super", we are still learning more of the 'fine tuning' that is either taking place or required. Those who did not attend the AGM in March missed out on two most informative addresses. The first was by two RBF officers who spoke on 'ill health pensions' also the changes that will take place on 1st July this year. The second was by Ray Christie, one of our members who is also very active with Association of Independent Retirees. (AIR). Part of Rays work is included on pages 9/10. Also included is an updated copy of the constitution.
Ed.

FUTURE MEETINGS



REPORT FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM this year was held in the '50 and Better Centre', Bathurst St. There was a good attendance from members. Our guest speakers from RBF were most informative and we all came away from the meeting knowing more than when we arrived. (Northern members note)

Frank Perry who has given many years service to TASS has resigned from the executive due to health reasons. Eric Free also did not stand this time for re-election due to pressure of other activities. The very good news is that we welcome to the executive two additions. Tony Robinson, who was re-elected to the executive after standing down for a couple of years, and a new face on the executive, Charles Thomas. To both, welcome and thank you both for offering your time to help steer TASS to even more success. All other office bearers were elected, unopposed. The constitution was updated and is included later in this issue.

Later in the meeting Ray Christie gave a presentation which compared the tax paid by 'Taxed' and 'Untaxed' Superannuation Schemes. He also then compared the tax paid by an 'untaxed' scheme with a superannuant who was allowed to have 'Separately Assessed Income' The difference in the tax paid on a gross income of \$50,000 was \$3,900. (see page 10)

Northern General Meeting

May 15th starting at 1.00pm

Mt. Pleasant Offices, Westbury Rd.

We have been able to get a speaker from RBF (Nick Eddy) who will outline the increased in 'after tax' pay that most will receive after July 1 this year. There is free parking at this venue and following the most successful Hobart AGM we are expecting a good attendance for this speaker. For those who have not previously been to the Mt. Pleasant Offices, the office is on the left side of Westbury Rd. near the top of the hill, when travelling from Launceston. Reception will give meeting room. My contact mobile is 0417 601021 if you get lost. Ed.

Executive meetings

19th June

17th July

Forestry Tasmania Starting at 1.30pm

AAAAAAAAAA

How to Give Your Cat a Worm Tablet

1 - Pick up the cat, and cradle it in the crook of your left arm as if holding a baby. Position right forefinger and thumb either side of the cat's mouth and gently apply pressure to cheeks whilst holding pill in right hand. As cat opens mouth, pop pill into mouth. Allow cat to close mouth and swallow.

2 - Retrieve pill from floor and cat from behind lounge. Cradle cat in left arm and repeat process.

3 - Retrieve cat from bedroom and throw away soggy pill.

4 - Remove foil wrap from new pill, cradle cat in left arm, holding rear paws tightly with left hand. Force cat's jaws open and push pill to the back of the cat's mouth with right forefinger. Hold cat's mouth shut and count to ten.

5 - Retrieve pill from goldfish bowl and cat from top of wardrobe. Call in spouse from garden.

6 - Kneel on floor, with cat firmly wedged between knees, hold front and rear paws. Ignore growls from cat. Get spouse to hold cat's head firmly with one hand while forcing wooden ruler into mouth. Drop pill down ruler and rub cat's throat vigorously.

7 - Retrieve cat from curtain rail, get another pill and remove foil wrap. Make note to buy a new ruler and repair curtains. Carefully sweep shattered figurines and vases from hearth and set aside for gluing later.

8 - Wrap cat in a large beach towel and get spouse to lie on cat with cat's head just visible from armpit. Insert pill into a drinking straw; force cat's jaw open with a pencil and blow pill down cat's throat with straw.

9 - Check pill bottle label to ascertain that pill is not harmful to humans, drink beer to take away taste. Apply bandaids to spouse's forearm and remove blood from carpet with cold soapy water.

10 - Retrieve cat from neighbour shed. Get another pill, open another beer. Place cat in cupboard and close door on cat's neck so as to leave the head showing. Force open mouth with a dessert spoon. Flick pill into cat's mouth with an elastic band.

11 - Fetch screwdriver from workshop and put cupboard door back on hinges. Drink beer. Fetch Scotch bottle and pour a shot and drink. Apply cold compress to cheek and check date of last tetanus injection. Apply whisky to cheek to disinfect. Throw away bloodied T-shirt and get new one from bedroom.

12 - Ring Fire Brigade to retrieve cat from tree across road. Apologise to neighbour who crashed into his front fence while trying to avoid cat. Take last pill from bottle.

13 - Tie the little bastard's front paws to it's rear paws with garden twine and bind tightly to leg of dining room table. Fetch a pair of leather gardening gloves from garden shed. Push pill into mouth followed by a large piece of fillet steak. Be rough about it. Hold cat's head vertical and pour 2 pints of water down cat's throat to wash pill down. (Be careful not to drown the little shit however tempting.)

14 - Consume remainder of Scotch. Get spouse to drive you to hospital, sit quietly while doctor stitches fingers and forearm and removes pill from your eye. Call into furniture store on way home and order new dining room table.

15 - Arrange for RSPCA to collect the mutant, flesh tearing cyclone from hell and ring pet shop and see if they have any guinea pigs.

How to get a Dog to take a Worm Tablet.

1 - Wrap pill in bacon

2 - Repeat step 1 for second pill

ENDURING GUARDIANSHIP - Something we all need to think about

Consider this: There is an accident – you are comatose and medical people are advising your family that there is very little/no chance you will ever be capable of living a normal life again – you will need 24 hour care and know little of what goes on around you. Your family has to decide whether to continue the fight for your life, or to make you as comfortable as possible and let you slip away. Wouldn't you relieve them of this terrible dilemma if you could?

There is now the opportunity for each of us to make known our wishes for our future in the event of some misfortune befalling us which removes from us our ability to think clearly and rationally and to convey our thoughts, needs and wishes to the medical people undertaking our care. This can be anything from a car accident to a stroke and can happen at any time. Previously these decisions were left to close family members – usually our children – who had to make life-changing decisions during a time of very great stress, which often left them wracked with despair and worse still, there could be bitter disagreements dividing families at a time when they most needed each other's support.

With the wonderful discoveries in medical science it is now possible to extend life and defeat many of the terrible diseases that have been the scourge of mankind in past times. But how far do we go?

This is NOT euthanasia by stealth, but a way for each of us to take control of our future while we are physically and mentally able, and to remove the decision-making from those we love, allowing them peace of mind.

For more information, telephone the Public Guardian on (03) 62 337 608 or visit any Service Tasmania shop and pick up the information sheet and form, or download a copy from www.justice.tas.gov.au/guar

The above item was kindly provided by our minutes secretary, Kay Jones and as she comments is an area that we all should consider. We also should make sure that we do have an up to date Will and possibly a Power of Attorney. Chances are that we will all come to an end one day, putting these things in order makes it easier for those we leave behind. Ed.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR MEMORY?

On page 5 of the November issue, I mentioned that that my wife and I met Dana Stienova in Prague. She travels the world delivering professional seminars on the topic "Memory Training for Seniors". Together with others from Prague she will be in Hobart in September this year and has offered to deliver an introductory course for FREE on Saturday 15th September. I have been charged with organizing the venue and at this stage it looks as if this will be at the Philip Smith Hall close to the Hobart Aquatic centre on the afternoon of the 15th. If like me you do find that your memory has become less than perfect then this event could be of interest. Again more details of this will appear in the August edition giving actual details and times also a description of what participants can expect to gain from the short course. However if your memory is not yet perfect it could be worthwhile adding a note on your calendar for this date.

A Word To The Wise

1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than **British, Americans or Australians**
2. The Mexicans eat lots of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than **British Americans or Australians**
3. The Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than **British Americans and Australians**
4. The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine & also suffer fewer heart attacks than **British Americans and Australians**
5. The Germans drink a lot of beer, eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than **British Americans and Australians**

CONCLUSION

Eat and drink whatever you like!
Speaking English is apparently
what kills you.

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More on 'Simpler Super'

In February RBF forwarded to members a brochure 'Retirement benefits fund news'. One item may have been missed by some members under the title 'Simpler tax on super'. The item read as follows:-

The good news is that all members will pay less tax on their super and some members will pay no tax after age 60. By understanding how the new tax rules affect your super, you can make the most of the tax changes.

Tasmanian Accumulation Scheme, Investment Account, TASSS, SFCSS and Parliamentary retiring Benefits Fund

Super benefits coming from these fully taxed superannuation schemes will become tax exempt when the member reaches the age of 60. Members who retire and access their super before they are 60 will continue to pay some tax until their 60th birthday.

Contributory Scheme & Parliamentary Superannuation Fund

Members of these partly taxed schemes will continue to pay tax when they access their super- even after the age of 60.

Tax will be payable on up to 70% of your Contributory Scheme benefit. This represents the employer component of the final benefit on which contributions tax has not yet been paid. After you reach 60, you will pay a lower rate of tax on Lump Sum withdrawals. Pension payments will receive a 10% rebate against this part of the benefit.

The remaining employee component of the benefit will be tax-free after you turn 60.

RBF superannuants

If you currently receive a retirement income from RBF, we will write to you to explain the changes and outline options you may have. No matter your age when you started your RBF pension, we will calculate your tax using the new rules when you reach 60 years of age.

This last statement from RBF is reassuring and hopefully will reach members before the 1 July when the new scheme begins. From the above it now seems that only the employer component of each member's contributions will be taxed. The actual percentage may vary between employees but will be supplied by RBF. Ed.

Council on the Aging (COTA)

Council on the Ageing (Tas) Inc.

The last issue of their newsletter had so many items of interest that all I can do is to briefly list them and advise any member wanting more information to contact them at **6228 1897** or write to them at **2 St. Johns Ave, NEW TOWN, 7008**. They are an affiliate of ours and have many common aims and objectives.

- The new Board is settling in and preparing for the activities planned for this year.
- COTA (Tas) is forming a Launceston Branch, meeting on the afternoon of the **1st Mon of each month**, at the Offices of Women Tasmania in St. Johns St.
- The Companion Card is now available to those in Tas. and is administered by The Disability Bureau in the Dept. of Premier & Cabinet. It is available to those who need a life long full time companion/carer.
- The card is accepted by participating businesses and will enable the cardholder to have a free ticket for the carer. Inquiries **1800 009 501**
- The Safe & Secure Living Booklet is now available, and speakers are also available to speak about it to community and social groups. More from **6228 1987**
- Third Age Learning Network (TALENT) has speakers available to groups, **phone** or internet at **admin@cotas.org** on line.



Call Centre Conversations

(Now you know why they are recorded)

Cust.> I have been ringing 0700 2300 for two days and can't get an answer, can you help?

Op.> Where did you get that no. from?

Cust.> It was on the door of the office.

Op.> Sir, they are our opening hours.

Cust.> Does your European breakdown policy cover me when I am travelling in Australia?

Op.> Doesn't the product give you a clue?

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LESSONS ON LIFE

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So he sent them each on a quest, in turn, to go and look at a pear tree that was a great distance away.

The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in autumn. When they had all gone and come back, he called them together to describe what they had seen

The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted.

The second son said no it was covered with green buds and full of promise.

The third son disagreed; he said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen.

The last son disagreed with all of them; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfilment.

The man then explained to his sons that they were all right, because they had each seen but only one season in the tree's life. He told them that you cannot judge a tree, or a person, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are experienced.

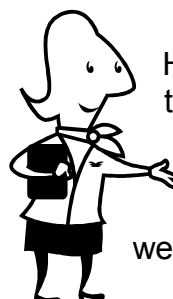
If you give up when it's winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, fulfilment of your autumn.

Moral: Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest. Don't judge life by one difficult season. Persevere through the difficult patches and better times are sure to come some time.



MAKE A DATE

If you are likely to be in Hobart on the 4th or 5th of Aug. the 2007 Retirees Expo and Seniors Show will be held at the Wrest Point Convention Centre. The previous ones were worth attending.



YOUR VEHICLE IS A TARGET FOR CRIMINALS!!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?

YOUR VEHICLE IS AT RISK OF MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT AND BURGLARY

Thieves are on the look out for opportunities to steal property from motor vehicles at all hours of the day, in all locations car parks, city streets, streets in your neighborhood, even your own driveway and garage or carport.

Thieves are particularly active at times when large numbers of vehicles are concentrated in an area due to a public event.

All property left inside an unattended vehicle is vulnerable to theft. Items which are particularly attractive to thieves include: car CD players, CDs, mobile phones, cash and cameras.

Don't be a victim.

Use commonsense and avoid unnecessary loss of property.

TIPS TO REDUCE THE RISK:

- fit an effective anti-theft device, such as an engine immobiliser or steering wheel lock;
- always fully close all windows, lock all doors and take the keys with you when leaving your car unattended - even if you will only be absent for a short time;
- avoid leaving any property inside the car. Advertise this prominently by displaying the "Empty Car" notice on the dashboard and leaving the glove-box and console bin open so potential thieves can see they are empty;
- if you have to leave property in your car, put it in the boot but avoid doing so after you have already parked the car, as thieves may be watching you;
- if you have off-street parking at home, use it. When going out at night, try and park in a well lit, secure, and open area;
- to protect your car CD player, consider installing a high quality car alarm with interior motion sensors. Take your detachable CD face with you - thieves commonly search cars for them;
- do not leave spare keys "hidden" on your car; and
- do not leave loose change in the console area.

IF YOU LEAVE ITEMS OF VALUE IN YOUR PARKED VEHICLE, YOU ARE
ENCOURAGING CRIME

PROPERTY CRIME - ARE YOU DOING YOUR BIT?

Discount on Electricity

On page 8 of the last issue was an item titled 'Discount Concessions on Electricity'

While the main part of the item was correct as it was a copy of an advertisement placed by Aurora in the Tasmanian press, there is an editorial error. Your editor incorrectly thought the HealthCare Card issued by Centrelink was the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card. A couple can qualify for the latter if they have an income of less than \$80,000 or \$50,000 for a single person. These limits only relate to the Centrelink Seniors Health Card not the Centrelink HealthCare Card. I have just been on the 'web' to check the limits on the HealthCare Cards. For a couple they must have an annual income of less than \$36,660 and for a single person less than \$21,996. I do apologise to those who have contacted Aurora to be told that the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card does not qualify for the discount. From the similarity of terms I think you will understand why I was confused. However if you do have a Health Care Card issued by Centrelink the discounts still do apply. Thank-you the two members who drew this to my attention. *Ed.*

Tax Rates on Super after July 1 This Year

As mentioned earlier, at our AGM Ray Christie gave a very good presentation on Superannuation, including Indexation, Splitting of income with Spouse and Taxation treatment of untaxed Super-funds if 'separately assessed'. On the following page is some of the comparative information produced by Ray on 'Separate Assessment'. While he reminds readers that he has applied the 10% offset in what he understands to be the correct method, this is still open to interpretation. The essence of the point he is making is that given two hypothetical Superannuants, both in an untaxed fund (Like RBF) each with an income of \$50,000 (\$30,000 from Super) then the superannuant in the fund that is taxed under the existing rules will pay \$3,900 more in tax than the superannuant who has the superannuation income separately assessed. This comparison is made as those in a taxed fund (e.g. Victoria & N.S.W) pay no tax on their super with the result that for them other income is either tax free or taxed at a very low rate. Those in an untaxed fund (e.g. RBF) are taxed at the marginal rate for every dollar of extra income.

As mentioned at the bottom of the right hand column of the next page the Senate Economics Committee recognised this unintended extra penalty and stated in Recommendation 4 that "The government should consider separately assessing, for taxation purposes, superannuation income streams and additional assessable income."

We understand that the Federal Government is not inclined to listen to this recommendation.

This also has ramifications for the finances of each State. In N.S.W and Victoria, superannuants will have a higher percentage of their income to spend in their State than do Tasmanian and also other State superannuants with untaxed schemes.

Comparison of "untaxed" defined benefits scheme and "separately assessed" income streams: over 60 years on 1-7-07

Hypothetical superannuants, each with a gross income of \$50,000 including non-super income of \$20,000.

"Untaxed Defined Benefits"	"Separately Assessed Income"
• Superannuation = \$30,000	• Superannuation = \$30,000
•	Tax on super pension = \$4,860
• Non-super Income = \$20,000	• Non-super Income = \$20,000
• Taxable Income = \$50,000	• Tax on non-super income = \$2,100
• Tax on Taxable Income = \$10,860	• Tax on super + non-super Income = \$6,960
• Eligible for 10% super tax offset of \$3,000	• Eligible for 10% super tax offset of \$3,000
• NET Tax payable = \$7,860	• NET tax payable \$3,960
• Medicare levy of 1.5% of Taxable Income (\$50,000) = \$750	• Plus Medicare Levy of 1.5% Of taxable income (\$50,000) = \$750
• Total Tax + Medicare Levy Actually paid = <u>\$8,610</u>	• Total Tax + Medicare Levy Actually paid = <u>\$4 710</u>

This is the method that will be applied from 1 July 2007 in accordance with the legislation passed by parliament in February 2007.

This is the method recommended by the Senate Economics Committee in RECOMMENDATION 4 of the Report dated February 2007: *"The government should consider separately assessing, for taxation purposes, Superannuation income streams and additional assessable income."*

The Power of One (again)

Members may remember that in Super-News of November 2005 an item described the achievements of one of our members, Margaret Jabour. Margaret had lobbied the State Government on the inadequacy of Prescription labels. The State government adopted her ideas and she was also appointed to a National committee, "Quality Use of Medicines". Well Margaret together with her walking frame attended our March AGM. I asked Margaret how the Medicine committee was going, the answer was "Very well. However my new issue is PEDESTRIAN RIGHTS IN CAR PARKS"

The following item by Margaret outlines this latest issue. In the item in the earlier Super-News I used the term "The Power of One". It still applies. Ed.

Recently I was nearly knocked over by a reversing car in a Restaurant Car Park. I hit the back of the car with my walking stick, they then stopped, no apology. I later went and reported it to a Police Station I was told that Pedestrians had the right of way in Car Parks. I have brought this matter up to a number of groups. When wanting confirmation on the "Right of Way" I was told that the law would need to be changed to bring this about, by a Snr. Police Sgt.

I have seen "Shared Areas" on the mainland which are clearly marked for all to see. One at Coogee Beach, where I saw toddlers running across the road in perfect safety. There is only one to my knowledge in Hobart at a Hardware Warehouse. I am lobbying for signs to be put up in Car Parks especially the Supermarket ones. Motorists need to be reminded of their obligations. I believe that the people walking to their cars outnumber the cars. When I have talked about this, people have come up to me after and related their near misses.

There are informed opinions that believe the pedestrian has the "Right of Way"

Margaret Jabour a concerned pedestrian

We all support Margaret in this new venture and wish her every success. While she was the person involved above I feel sure that many of us have also had similar close calls. Either as pedestrians or even drivers. Margaret's work could therefore benefit us all. Ed

USEFUL CONTACTS FOR MEMBERS

As a service to members TASS will include a regular section giving useful contact points (usually telephone numbers) which may be of value to members. If you are aware of a contact that could be of interest to other members which we have not included please advise the editor on 62601026.

RBF Pension queries or death of the superannuant	1800 622 631
Australian Tax Office	
Income Tax inquiries.....	132861
Superannuation help.....	131020
Tax Refund.....	132863
R.B.L. Help.....	132864
CENTRELINK	
To book an appointment at a regional office.....	131021
Pension enquiries.....	132300
Overseas Pensions.....	131673
Family enquiries.....	131305
Disability, sickness and carer.....	132717
Hearing or speech impairment.....	1800 000 587
Financial Services	
Burnie.....	6434 1535
Devonport.....	6424 0665
Launceston.....	6332 8298
Hobart.....	6232 1555
Bellerive.....	6244 0566
Better Hearing Australia (Hobart) Voluntary group.....	6228 0011

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PENSION LIMITS AS FROM MARCH 2007

INCOME TESTS

Part pension is possible for a couple receiving less than \$2,435 per fortnight

Single receiving less than \$1,455 per fortnight

For a Pensioner couple separated by ill health, less than \$2,882 per fortnight

Commonwealth Seniors Health Card for a couple on less than \$80,000 per year

for single on less than \$50,000 per year

ASSETS TESTS (not including your home)

a) For Home Owners		
Single Pensioners	For Full Pension	For Part Pension
Couples (Combined)	Up to \$161,500	Less than \$338,500
Couples Sep. due to ill health	Up to \$229,000	Less than \$523,500
Couples Sep. due to ill health	Up to \$229,000	Less than \$583,000
b) For non-home owners		
Single Pensioners	Up to \$278,500	Less than \$455,500
Couples (Combined)	Up to \$346,000	Less than \$640,500
Couples Sep. due to ill health	Up to \$346,000	Less than \$700,000

Should you change your address would you please advise us of your new address. Some members believed that advising RBF of a change will also involve that information also coming to us. This is not so. RBF quite correctly keep their address data confidential and will not pass this information on to us. If we do not have your address we cannot send you Super-News.