

Silver Threads

NEWS & UPDATES FROM CALVARY SILVER CIRCLE FORMERLY SILVER CIRCLE & HCS HOME CARE SERVICES

2007, A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PENSIONERS

Good things are happening this year for people who are on a part pension or who have previously been just outside the asset test limits to receive a pension.

There are two opportunities in 2007 to improve your financial position if you are not getting a full Age Pension.

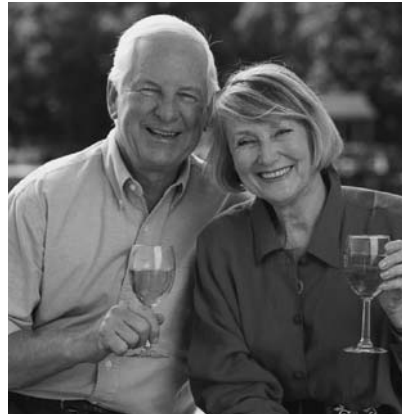
Opportunity One - up to Sept 20th 2007

The first opportunity will be available only until September 20. A correctly organised 'Guaranteed Income Plan investment' such as a complying annuity or term allocated pension, will have the benefit of only 50% (of the sum invested) counted as an asset for purposes of the pension.

Assessed income for pension purposes will also be considerably lower from a Guaranteed Income Plan than most other financial alternatives.

Opportunity Two - after Sept 20th 2007

The second opportunity will be introduced by the Government from September 20, when the rate of reduction in the pension, under the assets test, gets halved



from \$78 per \$1000 in assets over the allowed amount to \$39 per \$1000.

Currently, a person with less than \$161,500 in assets (apart from their home) will get a full pension (under the assets test) but it will be reduced by \$7,800 per year if their assets are \$261,500. After September 20, the reduction would only be \$3,900, that is, an increase in pension of \$150 per fortnight.

The effect of this change means that where the current pension cuts out when assets exceed \$334,250, after 20/9/07 the pension won't be lost until assessed assets exceed \$507,000.

If an investment of \$100,000 is made in a Guaranteed Income Plan before 20/9/07 by a person with assessed assets of \$261,500, the pension will increase after 20/9/07 by a massive \$5,850 per year - over double the amount of pension before the changes.

CEO Message

Welcome to this edition of Silver Threads

This is a newsletter for people who receive services from Calvary Silver Circle as well as for those who purchase service on behalf of others. We aim to bring you information regarding the organization as well as broader information which is of interest and / benefit to you.

In this edition, I would like to make special mention of the veterans and war widows who receive our service.

Following a re-tendering process for the provision of Veteran Home Care Services of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Calvary Silver Circle has been successful in continuing in all its existing Victorian and NSW regions, except in Melbourne west, and increasing in Melbourne south, especially across the Mornington Peninsula and Gippsland areas.



Libby Saunders

We have also become providers in a number of new areas- Adelaide, SE country of SA, Southern NSW, ACT, Greater Murray and the Hunter region.

We are delighted to have the opportunity to continue with our existing veteran and war widow clients and welcome those who are new to our organization.

With these new clients coming on board, we have reviewed our invoice payment methods. We hope to have Bpay or Postbillpay options available in the next month to add to the cheque, direct debit and credit card option for payments. Details will be sent to all clients when this is finalized.

Calvary Silver Circle and Little Company of Mary Health Care, the group of health services of which we are part, have great respect for the contribution made by veterans and war widows and are committed to meet the particular service needs of this group, as we do with other client groups. We welcome your feedback and suggestions at any time, as well as in the forthcoming client survey.

Continued on last page

in this issue

2007 **A Year of Opportunity for Pensioners**

CEO Message

What's in a Name Part 2

Health Spot **Dealing with Loss and Grief**

Community Noticeboard



A Service of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary
with values of hospitality, healing, stewardship and respect

2007, A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITY FOR PENSIONERS *Continued*



The same principles apply for those with assets well beyond the current thresholds for the age pension. Self-funded retirees have an opportunity before the 20th September 2007 deadline to restructure their finances to be eligible to receive a part pension.

These opportunities are available to homeowners and non-homeowners, married and single people of pension-age.

Asset levels at the time of writing are as follows:

	Single	Married
Full pension under the assets test		
Homeowner	\$161,500	\$229,000
Non-Homeowner	\$278,500	\$346,000

Current Maximum levels:

Pension cuts out under assets test (\$78/\$1000 over minimum rate)

Homeowner	\$334,250	\$516,500
Non-Homeowner	\$451,250	\$633,500

Proposed figures as of 20/9/07:

Pension cuts out under assets test (\$39/\$1000 over minimum rate)

Homeowner	\$507,000	\$803,500
Non-Homeowner	\$624,000	\$921,000

Whilst the pension will be automatically increased for those receiving a part pension as at 20/9/07, self-funded retirees will need to 'take action' themselves if they wish to be eligible for a part pension. This may require a "Guaranteed Income Plan" to be established before September 20 to reduce assets below the appropriate cut-out rate. After Sept 20, it will require an application to Centrelink in order to take advantage of the more generous asset tests.

Placing a high sum of money into a Guaranteed Income Plan could have excellent benefits by way of an increased pension however, for those without the available liquid cash, other options may be available.

The answer for those asset-rich cash-poor seniors may lie in the opportunity of a Reverse Mortgage. This is simply a loan against a person's home which is only repayable on the person's death or sale of the home (generally provided that the terms and conditions of the loan are met). All homeowners of pension age should feel comfort in knowing the fact that money is available against the security of their home - even though they may never need to use it. The fact that the system exists may help with other steps available to improve the pension situation.

Information prepared by
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Disclaimer:

This article provides general information only and should not be considered as financial advice. The information does not take into account any person's individual objectives, financial situation or needs. We recommend that you speak with a licensed financial adviser to discuss your own personal situation and needs.

For more information or advice:

- [Centrelink](#) for application forms regarding pensions and changes to Asset tests phone 13 23 00 or visit the website www.centrelink.gov.au
- [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) phone 133 254/ 1800 555 254
- [Centrelink Free Financial Information](#) service phone 13 23 00.
- [Institute of Financial Planners](#) - to find a financial planner in your area phone 1800 626 393
- [Lifetime Planning Pty Ltd](#) phone 03 9859 3554/ 1300 781 5586 or visit www.lifetimeplanning.com.au

What is in a name? Part 2

.... abbreviations and acronyms explained

Continuing on from our article in last edition of Silver Threads, here are some more abbreviations explained. If you have other abbreviations or acronyms that you would like to be deciphered, please send an email to vicki.hill@silvercircle.com.au or phone 1300 66 00 22.

D for Departments for each state providing Disability services (*)

DADHC - NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Health Care Phone: (02) 8270 2000

The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care funds programs and services that provide people with a disability, opportunities to participate in community life.

DoCS - NSW Department of Community Services Phone: 02 9716 2222

The Department of Community Services (DoCS) promotes the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and works to build stronger families and communities by providing child protection services, parenting support and early intervention, foster care, adoption services and help for communities affected by disaster.

DFC- SA Department of Family and Communities Phone 08 8226 8800

The Department of Family and Communities provides disability coordination, personal support and development and specialised services is now known as Disability SA.

DHS - Victorian Department of Human Services Phone 1800 783 783

Disability Services is part of the Department of Human Services. Their role is to fund providers across the non-government sector to provide direct support and care for people with an intellectual, physical, sensory and neurological disability, and acquired brain injury in Victoria. The Division also provides some care and support services to people with a range of disabilities. For more information about disability services in Victoria phone the Disability Intake and Response Service on 1800 783 783.



Safety Tip No. 5

If you are uncertain about using an ATM consider alternative access to money such as service stations or supermarkets.



Dealing Positively with Loss and Grief



Images in the media of the deaths of well-known personalities and anniversaries such as the Bali bombings can bring up painful memories of someone we may have lost. Grief is a common emotion and one that we all share at some time in our lives. Grief can be related not only to the loss of someone close but also loss of our own or another's function through disability or dementia, loss of relationships, retrenchment or death of a pet.

According to Kathy Wells from Calvary Bethlehem Bereavement Service, 'There are some subjects that may cause a conversation to be quickly changed and one of these is grief. In our rapidly moving, solution-based society there is much intent of getting on, throwing out the old and bringing on the new.'

Kathy explains, 'Feeling isolated with these loss feelings is a lonely place to be. Time is a great healer is a regular platitude offered but time can also be the enemy. Too much time alone, too much time to think. Thinking of your future which may include year ahead of changed circumstances can be difficult.'

What can help us through our grief?

Having an opportunity to talk is important, according to Kathy, 'Sometimes our family and friends help us by being there ready for a coffee, sitting in silence, listening as you tell the same story over and over again. This precious story needs to be retold for us to live with the reality of this loss. So we can then place this loss safely into our NEW normal life.'

Answering the question about how people move through grief, Kathy says, 'Stages of grief are often spoken about. There is no pattern to our grief. Everyone is an individual and according to our personality and circumstances we will have our own journey.'

This journey is not straight-forward, we can be up, down, back, forward all in a matter of a short period of time. In the early stages of our grief we may go in opposite ways. Be very energetic/be very quiet. Sleep all the time/be sleepless. Talk incessantly/not talk. Overeat/not eat. Stay at home/go out all the time.'

Kathy suggests some of the strategies we can use to help us through our grief 'Our bodies and our spirit need care. Gentle walks, nature, massage, swimming, relaxation tapes and music may all help. Joining a support group, visiting a grief counsellor, talking to friends, contacting your local community health centre may also assist you.'

For assistance or more information

Griefline Telephone Counselling Service

(03) 9596 7799

12noon - 3am 7days per week (part of Calvary Bethlehem Bereavement Service)

Lifeline 13 11 14 (Australia local call)

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 (Australia free call)

Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre 1800 242 636 (free local call)

The National Association for Loss and Grief

Information on counselling and support services, seminars, publications and links for people who are experiencing grief following the loss of someone close to them

- Australian Capital Territory (02) 6259 3940
- New South Wales (02) 9976 2803
- Victoria (03) 9351 0358/
Free call for rural areas 1800 100 023
- South Australia (08) 8300 0095

What is in a name? Part 2 *Continued*

... abbreviations and acronyms explained

DHCS - ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

(Disability ACT phone 02 6207 1086)

DHCS has responsibility for a wide range of human services in the ACT, including multicultural and community affairs, public and community housing services and policy, children, youth and family support services and policy, disability policy and services, therapy services, Child and Family Centres, the ACT Government Concessions Program, homelessness and community services.

DHHS Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Service's Disability Services Program

Phone 1300 799 530

The Disability Services program is made up of teams providing information and education, respite, short term support, service coordination, Resource Support, Day Options and Residential accommodation.

More information about Disability in your state phone

Disability Information & Referral Service NSW - www.dirc.asn.au or phone (02) 9657 1796

Disability Information & Resource Centre SA - www.dircsa.org.au or phone (08) 8236 0555

Disability online Victoria - www.disability.vic.gov.au or Disability Intake and Response Service call 1800 783 783

ADACAS - A.C.T. Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service- www.adacas.org.au or phone (02) 6242 5060

Aged and Disability Care Information Service, Tasmania - www.adcis.org.au or phone 03 6228 5799

For more information about any of the services or organisations mentioned, you can also phone

- Your local **Commonwealth Carelink Centre on 1800 052 222** or
- Calvary Silver Circle's **Information and Advisory Service on 1300 66 00 22.**

(*) Information on State government departments from their relevant websites

Community Noticeboard



DEAC Inc. is a federally funded not for profit organisation in Victoria that has assisted people with a disability find rewarding careers for over a decade providing individualised support via

- Pre-employment support - which includes career counselling, resume building, interview preparation as well as job search support.
- Post-employment support- made up of ongoing on the job support and assistance with accessing such things as workplace modifications

To find out how DEAC's tailored job matching program can assist you to find the right job please contact DEAC on 03 9650 2533 or visit www.deac.org.au

Note: If you know of an organisation, event or service that would be of interest to our readers please contact Vicki Hill on 1300 66 00 22 or via email at vicki.hill@silvercircle.com.au

Shepparton-Mooroopna Stroke Support Group

As from February, the Shepparton-Mooroopna Stroke Support Group will be meeting at The Hub in Mooroopna every second Wed of the month.

For more information - phone Gloria on 03 5825 3771, Julie 03 5824 1899 or Charles on 035825 4997.

Compass SA

Compass SA provides information, support and systematic advocacy. It is a self-funded, not-for-profit organisation aiming to make a difference to the lives of children and adults with disabilities, their families and carers.

To become a member or for further information phone 0402 584 370 or email compass_sa@hotmail.com

CEO Message *Continued from page one*

Since 1999, we have conducted an Annual Client Satisfaction survey considered as possibly the largest continuous performance evaluation for community services in the country. It seeks feedback from clients and service purchasers on key aspects of service delivery. It is collated and analysed by external consultants, with the report presented to management for consideration and action where this is indicated.

These surveys are again in the preparation stage and a sample of 4000-5000 clients will receive their survey in the next month. If you receive a survey in the mail, I encourage you to complete and return it, so that we can continue to provide responsive services to meet your requirements.

We shall report on the outcome in future newsletters
With best wishes

Libby Saunders, CEO

Flu Shots reminder

For people at risk, flu vaccinations are recommended every year and the best time to be vaccinated is Autumn. If you want more information visit www.fightflu.com.au or talk to your local doctor.



Is email better for you?



Would you prefer an emailed copy of Silver Threads? If you would like to receive your Silver Threads via email please phone Vicki Hill on 1300 66 00 22 or email vicki.hill@silvercircle.com.au

Silver Threads

Silver Threads is a newsletter by Calvary Silver Circle. Views expressed in it do not necessarily reflect those of Calvary Silver Circle management.

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