Date Introduced: 13 September 1984
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. Neal Blewett, M.P., Minister for Health, Representing the Minister for Social Security

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

To introduce Budget related changes to hostel care, personal care, delivered meals and to respite care subsidies.

To widen the scope of Repatriation care available through the Anzac Hostel in Brighton, Victoria.

To make to minor changes to the Social Security Act 1947.

Background

The Anzac Hostel was established under the terms of the Baillieu gift, to which the Repatriation Fund (Baillieu Gift) Act 1937 applies.

Under the terms of the trust, the Anzac Hostel is to be used as a hostel for totally and permanently incapacitated soldiers and sailors of World War I.

Main Provisions

Under the Aged or Disabled Persons Homes Act 1954 the Commonwealth pays to approved organisations a subsidy for care in hostels and for extra personal care. Subsidies will also be available on a respite basis.

The hostel care subsidy is paid in respect of residents of approved hostels. The Bill, under clause 4(a), raises the rate of subsidy from $10 to $11 per week from 1 January 1985.

The personal care subsidy is paid in respect of hostel residents assessed as requiring, and receiving, assistance in the performance of daily living tasks. The
subsidy for those receiving both hostel and personal care under clause 4(b), will rise from $50 to $55 per week.

Respite care bed and also personal care subsidies are available to encourage the provision of temporary relief for those caring for elderly people in their own homes. A respite care bed subsidy, at the same level as the new hostel care rate ($11), will be available where a bed is occupied for 14 days or less in a 28 day period and at the new personal care rate ($55) when a bed is occupied for at least 15 days during the 28 day period (clauses 4(c) and 4(d)). These arrangements will apply from 17 January 1985.

The Delivered Meals Subsidy Act 1970 allows payments to assist in the establishment, expansion, improvement or maintenance of approved 'meals on wheels' services. A basic per-meal subsidy (50 cents) exists with a higher subsidy (55 cents) for meals with a vitamin C supplement. The Bill provides (clause 7, sub-section 6(1B)) for an increase to 65 cents in the per-meal subsidy for meals with vitamin C supplement. Sub-section 6(1A) provides that there will be new conditions on the payment of this new rate. These conditions will be published in the Commonwealth Gazette. The new rate will apply from 1 January 1985.

The Repatriation Act 1920 is amended in respect of the Anzac Hostel and in respect of the anomalies that also appear in the Social Security Act and are mentioned below.

Clause 28(1) widens the purposes for which the hostel may be used. Currently the hostel is used for the accommodation of totally and permanently incapacitated World War I veterans. This clause enables use of the hostel as a day care and respite care facility for eligible veterans and facilitates integration into Commonwealth programs for the frail aged.

Amendment is made to the Social Security Act 1947 in Part IV of the Bill. Currently a provision exists that a child be disregarded as a dependent if that child is receiving specified benefits (e.g. supporting parent's benefit). Clause 10 extends this provision to disregard a child as a dependent if that child is receiving any income security payment under the Principal Act or the Tuberculosis Act 1948. Following amendments subsequently remove redundant references to dependent children. This clause will operate on payments falling due on or after 1 November 1984.

Clause 19 removes an anomaly in the circumstances under which family allowance ceases for a dependent child
reaching the age of 16 who does not become a student child. At present a family allowance ceases at age 16 unless the Director General is satisfied within 3 months of that date that the dependent child has become a student child.

Clause 19 omits this automatic loss. The change follows an Administrative Appeals Tribunal Case where a child qualified as a student child but where the Director-General was not satisfied within 3 months and the allowance ceased. A new claim for the allowance was successful however, due to the wording of the Act, but arrears were not payable.

For further information, if required, contact:

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