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SENIORS WELCOME

CONCESSIONS RISE

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Seniors in South Australia have warmly welcomed the State Government's announcement that it will increase energy concessions by 25% from July 1 this year.

Mr Ian Yates, the Chief Executive of COTA Seniors Voice, said boosting energy concessions from \$120 to \$150 a year immediately and indexing them by 5% per annum for the next three years was in line with COTA's pre-election claims for seniors.

However, the announced 5% increase in water concessions was inadequate, given that water prices will double over the next five years.

It was also surprising that local government concession rates had not been mentioned in the Premier's announcement.

Mr Yates said the rise in energy concessions was particularly welcome given that these had not increased since 2003 while the cost of electricity had escalated dramatically during that period.

"The Government's decision to index this concession for the next three years is a constructive first step in establishing a soundly-based concessions policy that will take the politics out of concession levels," he said.

"However, we are not there yet and we are looking for a commitment from both major parties to set up an independent review to establish a sustainable and fair concessions policy indexed to price rises."

Mr Yates said that the announced rise was a Government pre-election decision that was locked in no matter who won the State election, rather than an election promise.

"The one area of disappointment is the announcement that water concessions will rise by only 5% now and be indexed by 5% per annum," he said.

"As a result of the Rann Government's own decision, water prices will double in the next five years, leaving pensioners well out of pocket and with much of their recent pension increase disappearing in State Government water rates.

“We will continue to press for the water concession to be doubled and then indexed to water prices.

“We are also curious that local government rates concessions have not been increased and call on these concessions to be increased by 5% per annum for the next three years as well.”

Note to media: COTA Seniors Voice is no longer named Council on the Ageing. Can you please ensure all references to our organisation are COTA Seniors Voice. Thank you.

Further Information:

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