



Search for love, money

Not enough bread, Kev

By CHLOE KENNEDY

THE boost to aged pensions has prompted a mixed reaction from local pensioners, with some saying the extra cash will do little to improve their quality of life.

The Federal Government last week raised the single aged pension by \$32.49 a week, to come into effect on September 20.

Retired couples will get an extra \$10.14 a week combined.

Kilburn resident, **Helen Cearn**s said the extra \$10 was a "little drop in a big bucket" for her and her husband **Brian**.

"It may as well not have been given to us," Mrs Cearn told the *Standard Messenger*.

"It might buy a couple of loaves of bread but that's about it."

Mrs Cearn said the increase was a "downer" for the couple who are the carers of their three grandchildren.

June Goodhand, of Klemzig, who is on a couples' pension,



said the rise was acceptable but she had hoped for more.

"We try to live off the pension and not go into (our) savings but sometimes we have to," she said. "The money will go in with housekeeping with the price of groceries going up all the time."

Single aged pensioner **Emily Paterson**, of Hampstead Gardens, said the money would really help out with everyday expenses.

"\$30 a week - that will pay for some groceries," Ms Paterson said. "I might even buy a new winter top." A Messenger Com-

munity News survey of nearly 1200 pensioners last October revealed many were isolated and struggling financially, with nearly half eating less than three meals a day and 90 per cent spending less than \$25 a week on entertainment or activities.

Council on the Ageing chief executive **Ian Yates** said the extra money for single aged pensioners would "make a real difference to their weekly lives", but he said many couples would be "legitimately disappointed". He said a rise in the pension age from 65 to 67, between 2017 and 2023, was an "understandable move" to pay for the pension increases but he called on the government to improve its efforts to promote mature age employment.

"There's no gain in raising the age from 65 to 67 if people are sitting on unemployment benefits or disability pensions because they're not welcome in the workplace," he said.



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FEELING DOWN: Helen Cearns is disappointed with an extra \$10.14 per week.