



Pension increases to proceed this week

CANBERRA - The government will go ahead with promised pension increases and carer payments this week.

Families and community services minister Jenny Macklin said the \$600 carer supplement payments would start from June 17.

She said she would introduce pension change legislation to parliament today to allow for the \$32 increase to the single pension and \$10 a week for couples from September 20.

"These are going to be very important for carers, for pensioners - they need

this money - but it will also be good for the economy," she told the Ten Network.

Ms Macklin said there was no requirement for repayment by the family of a pensioner who qualified for the December bonus but had since died.

"It's really only the Liberal Party that is so hard-hearted as to say that a widow, grieving for their pensioner husband wouldn't receive this money," she said.

Greens Senator Rachel Siewert welcomed the proposed introduction of legislation increasing aged pension and carer payments.

"It follows a long campaign to pressure the government to increase the income of some of the most vulnerable Australians," she said in a statement.

Senator Siewert said the Greens remained concerned that single parents and the unemployed had been left out.

"We will be moving amendments in the Senate to ensure those Australians who find themselves out of work," she said.

Senator Siewert said the prime minister and deputy prime minister had both admitted they could

not survive on the aged pension.

Yet those relying on Newstart while between jobs survived on just \$226 a week - far less than the aged pension rate.

"Single parents are struggling on below the aged pension rate and raising children in poverty," she said.

"During hard economic times the government has a responsibility to ensure the most vulnerable members of our community don't get left behind."

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