
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

To even contemplate such a huge increase in electricity charges of about 20% in this economic climate is unconscionable and irresponsible.

We were formerly self-funded retirees, now part-pensioners, and are writing to protest the proposed increase of approximately 20% in our electricity charges. It is an outrageous increase and, simply put, we cannot afford it. We already had an increase in electricity charges this financial year and have just received an announcement of an increase in our Home & Contents Insurance; our private health fund membership is increasing by 11.5% April 1 and we'll also be receiving an increase in our rates, but not above rate pegging (whatever that % will be). Also our water and sewerage rates were increased by 10% & 15% a few months ago. The cost of groceries has escalated at an alarming rate as well. These are all essential services.

We were fairly comfortable self-funded retirees the end of December 2007. In January 2008 an investment in our self-managed super fund was frozen and in February the distributions suspended. We've not received one cent from that investment, which was producing about \$2,000/month income alone, for over a year now. The investment was considered to be "low risk" and was "capital guaranteed" when we invested in January 2004. In the past 14 months the value of our investments overall has fallen by over \$375,000 and in September 2008 we became part-pensioners, which is helping out a little. We have been forced to reduce our allocated pension by 70% now and will need to reduce it further in April to preserve capital. We know of mature age people who were living independently on their investments and are now having to cut into their capital to make ends meet, which means reduced income from the lower capital base and much lower interest rates. Many have also become part-pensioners.

We've been trying to reduce our expenses by cutting back on petrol and social activities and non-essential spending. We could drop our Home & Contents Insurance and Private Health Insurance, although it wouldn't be prudent to do so. We're also reducing electricity and water usage where possible and buying "no frills" groceries.

Please take into consideration our circumstances, and many others in the exact situation we're in through no fault of our own, when making a final decision on any increase in electricity charges,

We trust you'll make the right decision. Please feel free to contact us if you wish.

Sincerely,