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MEDIA RELEASE

435,000 aged pensioners worse off after Queensland Budget

Over 435,000 aged pensioners will be worse off under the 2014-15 Queensland Budget, unless the Australian Government reinstates its funding contribution for pensioner concessions on energy, rates, and transport. This funding cut will affect not only older people but also veterans, people with disability, carers, and single parents.

Mark Tucker-Evans, Chief Executive of COTA Queensland, has urged the Queensland Premier to continue funding for core concessions even without the Australian Government contribution.

According to the State Budget Concessions Statement 2014-15, individual concessions for electricity, gas, rates, water, car registration, and public transport fares will be reduced unless the Australian Government reinstates its National Partnership funding for concessions.

"Concessions on council rates, motor vehicle registration, energy and public transport are vital to Queensland pensioners - and have been a significant part of the social safety net since the Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card was introduced 20 years ago.

"Concessions on rates, energy and water help older people stay at home longer - this is an overall benefit to the aged care system. Concessions on motor vehicle and public transport help older people stay connected to their communities - this is an overall benefit to the health system.

"The unravelling of these concession arrangements is a failure of Federation," said Mr Tucker-Evans.

"I would encourage Queensland's 12 Senators, regardless of their political affiliation, to work together to reinstate Australian Government funding to Queensland of \$54.2 million in the 2014-15 budget."

For more information, contact Mark Tucker-Evans at mte@cotaqld.org.au or mobile 0411 389 946.

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